



REFERENDUM: Iraqi soldiers stand on a car decorated with a poster of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and an Iraqi flag during a demonstration in Baghdad in support of the Iraqi leader ahead of Sunday's referendum (see page one) (AFP photo)

Maid 'cried with joy' for reprieve from execution

DUBAI (AFP) — Filipina maid Sarah Balabagan "cried for joy" after the family of the man she killed dropped its demand for her execution, a diplomat said Sunday.

"She was very happy. Tears rolled down her face," the Philippine embassy's assistant labour attaché, Carmelita Arriola, told AFP after breaking the news on Saturday to Balabagan at her prison in the city of Al Ain.

The young maid was sentenced to death last month when a United Arab Emirates (UAE) court convicted her of the premeditated murder of her UAE employer

Mohammad Abdullah Al Baloushi, rejecting her claim that he had raped her.

But the Baloushi family told the Islamic court in Al Ain on Saturday that they had "relinquished their right to demand" her execution following UAE President Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan's "private endeavours," the court said.

Such efforts are customary when Islamic courts hand down death penalties, it added. But the courts, which are due to hold a hearing on Oct. 30, could still impose a jail sentence on Ms. Balabagan.

The death sentence had sparked protests in the Philippines, already angry over the March hanging in Singapore of another maid, Flor Contemplacion, for a double murder. France also protested over Ms. Balabagan's sentence.

But the court said the development was "due entirely to events within the due judicial process of the UAE."

"I just told the court I don't want the death sentence," Baloushi's 24-year-old son Faraj told AFP. "Sure it was a difficult decision but what can I do."

He said he told the appeals court he had agreed instead to accept 150,000 dirhams (\$40,000) in compensation for his 85-year-old father's death in July last year.

Philippine ambassador to the UAE Roy Senes had thanked Sheikh Zayed "for his kindness and compassion in prevailing upon" the Baloushis to drop their demand.

Mr. Senes had pushed for Ms. Balabagan's acquittal, supporting her argument that she acted in self-defence when she stabbed Baloushi 34 times with the knife he used to rape her.

Meanwhile Philippine diplomats and Ms. Balabagan's parents Karim and Bai, who arrived in the UAE last week to attend appeals proceedings, were due to visit the Baloushi home and thank them on Sunday, the diplomats said.

"They're most welcome," Faraj Baloushi said, adding he liked the Balabagan family

Triumphant Leader Museum in Baghdad displays rare weapons

BAGHDAD (AFP) — On the eve of a referendum to hand him seven more years in power, Saddam Hussein inaugurated a huge museum dedicated to his life and stuffed with gold and gem-encrusted weapons from around the world.

The Iraqi leader on Saturday proudly strolled through the three-storey Triumphant Leader Museum, even though it is still not open to the public.

The building constructed after the 1991 Gulf war has an amazing display of everything from humble earthenware plates from an anonymous Zambian to gold swords from Gulf emirs and a well-worn rifle handed to the "great leader" by an Iraqi soldier on the Iranian front.

"Everything the president has received is here, because he wants to show that it belongs to the people and not to him," said director Walid Khaleel Hamadi.

Everything, that is, apart from a stuffed bear offered by an American in 1994 which the director keeps in his office.

There is one weapons gallery containing more than 100 pistols and revolvers, 30 hunting rifles, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and even a miniature rocket-propelled grenade

launcher.

Once of the most recent pieces on show is an Asprey P228 pistol whose moving parts are in gold.

In other parts of the gallery there are rusty old guns from Yemen encrusted with precious stones, and antique Enfield rifles alongside modern U.S. firearms including a gold-plated Colt shotgun given by an "Iraqi citizen."

In the centre of the exhibition hall stand three large calibre gold-plated shells donated by the Iraqi military industrialisation organisation to celebrate the end of the 1980-1988 war against Iran.

President Saddam has used many of the weapons, according to an official guide without saying what he had been aiming at.

Further on are more than 100 swords and daggers glittering with gold and precious stones.

Among them is a silver sword given to President Saddam when he was deputy leader of Iraq in 1974 by then French prime minister, now President Jacques Chirac.

Pieces of gold, silver, crystal, paintings, medals, decorations and ornaments of all shapes and sizes and from all over the world can be found in the museum's six other galleries.

Facts and figures on Iraq

Associated France Presse

ALMOST 19 million people live in Iraq, which on Sunday held its first presidential referendum to approve Saddam Hussein as leader for another seven-year term.

Some 4.5 million people live in Baghdad, while the country also has three million Kurds residing mainly in the three autonomous provinces of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. All three provinces have been excluded from the elections in which 7.5 million people are eligible to vote.

The state religion in Iraq is Islam, with about 55 per cent of the population being Shiite Muslims. There are also about a million Christians.

The Iraqi parliament or national assembly is composed of 250 members elected by popular vote.

Oil is the country's main resource, but since its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 it has been subjected to an oil and trade embargo by

the United Nations Security Council.

A member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Iraq's proven reserves are estimated at 112 billion barrels while its gas reserves have been put at 7.5 trillion cubic metres.

Before the 1991 Gulf war, when a U.S.-led coalition drove Iraqi troops out of neighbouring Kuwait, Iraq had a production capacity of 3.25 million barrels per day (b/d).

Western experts have put the country's military debt at more than \$100 billion, plus \$150 billion demanded by the U.N. to compensate victims of Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait.

Iran has also called for \$100 billion in damages for the bitter 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Before the Gulf conflict Iraq was the strongest military force in the Arab World. Today its army includes 382,000 troops and 650,000 reservists, according to the annual report by the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies.

Its land forces alone account for 350,000 men, including 100,000 reservists, seven divisions of the elite Republican Guard and 19 mechanised infantry divisions.

Iraq also has 2,700 tanks, 900 light-armoured combat vehicles, 1,500 reconnaissance armoured vehicles, 2,000 armoured troop transporters, 1,500 pieces of heavy artillery and 500 helicopters, including 120 equipped with weapons and some with Exocet air-to-surface missiles.

The navy has 2,500 personnel, with one frigate, seven patrol ships and four minesweepers.

For its part, the air force has 30,000 men with six bombers, 130 ground attack planes and 180 fighters.

There is also an important paramilitary force of 20,000 border guards and 4,800 security troops.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian defence minister to visit Iran

TEHRAN (R) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev plans to visit Iran in the near future, Iran's ambassador to Russia was quoted on Saturday as saying. Etelaat newspaper reported Mr. Grachev conveyed his intention to Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Safari in a meeting in Moscow on Thursday. Iranian and Russian officials were not available for comment. Mr. Grachev was quoted as saying Russia wanted to continue cooperation with Iran. "Russia will allow no country to decide partners for Russia," the minister was quoted as saying in an apparent reference to the United States. In recent weeks, Russia has had to defend its two contracts to build three reactors at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant against criticism from the U.S. and others who argue Tehran might use the technology to build a nuclear arsenal.

UAE sends \$11m in aid to Bosnia

DUBAI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has sent an additional \$40 million dirhams (almost \$11 million) in humanitarian aid to war-torn Bosnia, newspapers said Sunday. The money collected from individuals and humanitarian associations was the second batch of aid sent to Bosnian Muslims since a fundraising campaign in July netted \$44 million in the UAE.

UAE adopts death penalty for drug smugglers

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan on Saturday approved a law enforcing the death penalty for drug-traffickers, the official news agency WAM reported. Sheikh Zayed endorsed the law which also included intensified prison terms of up to seven years for drug abusers. The federal cabinet introduced capital punishment for drug smuggling earlier this year after a surge in trafficking operations. Police records showed more than eight tonnes of hashish, heroin, cocaine and other drugs had been seized over the past three years. Most of them originated from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Last week, the UAE created a high-level committee to combat drugs, grouping the deputy prime minister and intelligence officials along with the ministries of interior, education, information, and Islamic affairs.

4 children die trying to save pigeon

ALGIERS (AFP) — Four children aged between seven and nine were killed as they tried to save an injured pigeon sheltering in a dried out well, the official Algerian news agency APS reported Saturday. The children died Thursday in a well near Ghardaia, southern Algeria, the agency said. APS added one child, aged seven, and three others aged nine, climbed down into the well to rescue an injured pigeon. The side of the well collapsed as they were attempting to climb out, burying them under piles of earth, the agency said. The agency reported that hundreds of wells dug in the area to gather ground water have been abandoned after either drying up or becoming polluted.

Indian premier begins visit to Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao arrived on Sunday in Egypt for a 24-hour visit during which he will meet President Hosni Mubarak and sign a treaty on fighting terrorism, airport officials said. Mr. Rao was met at the airport by his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki, who he was to join in talks before meeting daily Al Ahram in an interview published on Sunday he would also sign accords on increasing scientific and media cooperation between the two countries. Mr. Rao said his talks with Egyptian officials would also deal with "how to benefit from economic reform programmes" in both nations, calling for "increased economic cooperation between India and Egypt." The Indian premier and his delegation, which includes Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, will leave for the Colombian city of Cartagena Monday to attend the 11th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Israeli singers welcome in Yemen — Iryani

TEL AVIV (R) — Yemen Foreign Affairs Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani said in an interview published on Sunday that Israeli artists of Yemenite descent would be welcome in his country. Dr. Iryani told Israel's Maariv newspaper he would try to organise a trip to Yemen for Israeli entertainers Ofra Haza and Shoshana Damari, who are of Yemenite extraction, despite a lack of diplomatic relations between Israel and Yemen. "The Jews of Yemenite descent are our good network in Israel and the United States," the minister told Maariv in an interview conducted in the United States. "We permit freedom of movement for all Jews who remain in Yemen ... but full peace and direct trade will take place only within a comprehensive framework of peace with the Arab World that will include Syria," he said.

Iranian steward charged with hijacking

BEERSHEBA (AFP) — An Iranian air steward who asked for asylum after forcing a plane to land in Israel was charged with hijacking on Sunday, legal sources said. A court in the southern town of Beersheba ordered Jabari Rizah, 30, to be remanded in custody until his trial, in Israel or the United States, has said he wants to convert to Judaism and marry a Jewish girl, since hijacking an Iranian Boeing 707 with more than 170 people on board on Sept. 19. The steward fired a bullet into the cockpit of a domestic Iranian flight heading to the Gulf holiday island of Kish and ordered it to head west, according to Israeli officials. The Israeli authorities authorised the plane and passengers to return to Tehran after it landed in the south of the country. Iran, which has accused Israel of involvement in the hijacking, wants his extradition and has appealed to the International Civil Aviation Organisation for help.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Shelley Duval's Bedtime Stories

14:30 ... Hey Day

15:00 ... Nature World of Mitsuki

16:00 ... I Love Lucy

17:00 Children's programme — Cocote Minute

17:30 Serie — Les Aventures Du Rio Verde

19:00 ... News in French

19:15 ... Magazine — Minibus

19:30 ... News Headlines

19:35 ... Camp Wildcat

20:00 ... Women Eat Last

20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful

21:10 ... Harts of the West

22:00 ... News in English

22:25 ... Inspector Morse

23:59 ... American Chart Show

PRAYER TIMES

04:18 ... Fajr

05:35 ... (Sunrise) Duha

11:21 ... Dhahr

14:36 ... 'Asr

17:08 ... Maghreb

18:25 ... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swdith. Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terranova Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 628266

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 625258.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Unstable weather conditions are expected to prevail, thus skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers and winds southeasterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp. 13/26

Amman 27, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 36 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hisham Kan'an 649028

Dr. Nassor Ibrahim 649028

Dr. Usamah Hussini 847289

Dr. Issam Al Ammar 890504

Firas pharmacy 661912

Fardous pharmacy 778336

Al Asana pharmacy 637055

Natroukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Natroukh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ali Al Omari 772032

Alqud pharmacy (—)

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 199

Civil Defence Emergency 617001

Fire Brigade 775121

Blood Bank 843402

Highway Police 896390

Traffic Police 630321

Public Security Department 605800

House Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 121

Telephone Information 010230

Overseas Calls 623101

Central Amman Telephone 661101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 773111

Jordan Television 774111

Radio Jordan 680100

Water Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381

Company 08-53200

HOSPITALS

Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 642816

Aklich Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mallat, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 664127/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Mahajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26

Army, Marfa 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602495/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Gov. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)99990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)725555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275

The Al Naefes Hospital (02)577100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sanas (RJ)

08:00 Damascus (RJ)

08:30 Jeddah (RJ)

09:00 New Delhi (RJ)

09:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

09:30 Agaba (RJ)

09:30 Beirut (RJ)

10:10 Cairo (RJ)

18:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

22:40 Bangkok, Jakarta (RJ)

22:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:50 Khartoum (SD)

12:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:40 Beirut (RJ)

07:00 Agaba (RJ)

11:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:10 Cairo (RJ)

12:25 London (RJ)

12:30 Frankfurt (RJ)

20:45 Damascus (RJ)

20:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

21:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

23:59 Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:35 London (KJ)

06:00 Istanbul (TK)

06:30 Rome (AZ)

07:45 Beirut (ME)

13:30 Khartoum (SD)

14:30 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)

20:25 Cairo (MS)

23:10 Damascus, London (BA)

02:30 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

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18:45 Paris, Damascus (AF)

19:30 Cairo (MS)

21:50 London (BA)

01:25 Amsterdam (KL)

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Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

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Banana (Mukammal)	620
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Cauliflower	250/200
Cucumbers (large)	400/300
Cucumbers (small)	400/300
Eggplant	200/160
Garlic	750/600
Grapes	650/450
Lemon	320/150
Marrow (large)	180/100
Marrow (small)	300/200
Okra	900/700
Olives (green)	250/150
Onion (dry)	300/200
Pepper (hot)	150/100
Pepper (sweet)	230/180
Pomegranate	340/240
Potato	310/200
Sprinch	350/220
String Beans	850/700
Tomato	100/50

House mourns death of former Deputy Salman Qudah

AMMAN (Petra) — The speaker and members of the Lower House of Parliament Sunday mourned the death of former Deputy member Salman Mohammad Qudah, who passed away on Sunday.

Mr. Qudah, who was born in Ain Janna, Ajloun, served as a member of the Lower House in three different terms in 1950, 1963 and 1967.

He was also a member of the National Consultative Council in 1978.

Mr. Qudah assumed various government posts, including provincial governor and district governor in several cities.

He joined the Jordan Armed Forces, and became an officer in 1946 after graduating with a law degree from Damascus University.

Mr. Qudah was a member of a national committee



Salman M. Qudah

entrusted with preparing the country's five-year development plan of 1986-1990.

He also was a member of the Royal Commission charged with drafting the Jordanian Civil Code, and was an observer in the Palestinian National Council and a member of the Yarmouk University Board.

Study says Disi can yield 160-180 mcm of potable water for next 100 years

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A four-year study has determined that the Qa-Disi aquifer in the south can annually yield 160 million cubic metres (mcm) to 180 million mcm of potable water for Jordan for the next 100 years, plugging a major gap in the Kingdom's water needs.

The main focus of the finding was announced at a ceremony held at the Water Authority of Jordan (W.A.J.), where the final report of the study was formally presented to Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irshaidat by British Ambassador Peter Hinchcliff.

The British-financed study, conducted by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick, a

British consultancy firm, also included a seven-point "action plan" outlining the steps to deliver up to 100 mcm of water to Jordan through a pipeline.

At present about 60 to 80 mcm of water from Qa-Disi are used annually in the south, mainly for agricultural purposes, and the projected quantity of 80 to 100 mcm to be pumped to Amman is above the present consumption, said Shami Puri, project manager of Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick.

As such, Mr. Puri explained, the total yield of the aquifer could be between 160 million and 180 mcm per year.

At present rates of consumption, that would mean about 20 per cent of Jordan's total water consumption and more than half of the Kingdom's strategic water resources "with great future potential," said the British offer in 1989 to finance the study came "at the right time."

The initial study of the aquifer by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick was launched in 1991 with an initial grant of JD 1.5 million channelled through the British government's Overseas Development Agency (ODA).

The grant was complemented by equipment and vehicles worth JD 3.5 million donated during the visit in March this year by British Prime Minister John Major.

It also covered the cost of training eight Jordanian water engineers and experts in the United Kingdom. Mr. Irshaidat, the minister, described the Qa-Disi

reservoir, which straddles the Jordanian-Saudi border, as part of Jordan's strategic water resources "with great future potential," and said the British offer in 1989 to finance the study came "at the right time."

"It is a very important project for Jordan, which is facing water problems," the minister said in brief comments at Monday's ceremony. The next step in exploiting the aquifer, he said, was laying a pipeline to Amman.

The Jordanian government intends to submit to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit the pipeline project, with options open for the private sector to invest in it either through "build, own and operate" or "build, own

and transfer" arrangements.

The estimated total capital cost of the project is \$405 million, of which 70 per cent is being sought from external sources, according to a project summary made available to the Jordan Times.

A feasibility study on the pipeline project, being conducted by an American-British consortium, is expected to be ready by April 1996.

The Jordanian government financed the nearly \$1 million study.

Ambassador Hinchcliff told the gathering at the handing over of the Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick report that the British government hoped that the findings of the study will be an "important contributor to meeting

Jordan's water needs."

According to Mr. Puri, the project manager of the study, the assessment that the aquifer could yield between 160 million and 180 million cubic metres of water per year took into account the present 600 million-cubic-metre-per-year Saudi exploitation of the reservoir and the possibility of increases in Saudi use of the reservoir.

Qa-Disi water is described as the oldest fossil water on earth dating back to 35,000 years.

A study conducted by United Nations experts suggested last year that the water could be bottled and marketed as "God's own water" since no fossil reservoir older than Qa-Disi has been uncovered anywhere.

Judge agrees to postpone trial of 'Islamic Revivalists'

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The attorney for six people accused of sabotage asked the State Security Court Sunday to postpone their trial to allow them time to present a written statement contesting the court's jurisdiction over the case.

During a five-minute session Presiding Judge Hafez Amin read out the charge

sheet which included illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials for illicit use.

When Judge Amin asked the six defendants how they pleaded, attorney Kamal Nasser demanded to postpone the case.

Judge Amin conceded and set Oct. 30 as the new date to hear the defence.

According to the prosecutor general's charge sheet, the group, known as the

"Islamic Revivalists" which started gathering its members in 1990, was planning to carry out attacks against foreigners in Jordan using explosives and automatic weapons.

The group was apprehended before perpetrating any attack. The Central Intelligence were tipped off on March 10, 1995 about the group's activities.

Children fault authorities for 'inattention' to child abuse

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of concerned children has criticised the government for what it sees as a lack of attention by officials to the issue of child abuse.

Khalud Juteim, the 15-year-old chairperson of a one-day workshop on "Violence Against Children," compared statistics from the 1985 to 1989 against 1990 to 1994 on the rate of reported incidents of domestic violence taken from the Criminal Investigation Statistical Department.

What she found was that the cases had more than doubled. The comparison between both periods showed an increase from 210 cases to 477 cases.

Equally, if not more alarming, Khalud said the figures also showed that 50 per cent of the children were killed as a result of domestic violence, and the rest were sexually abused or were the victims of attempted murder.

Lawyer Sawwan Ishaq, representing the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) at the workshop, supported the children's arguments and said that Jordanian laws designed to protect children are not enforced.

"For example, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Jordan signed and therefore is obligated to enforce, is not implemented

because two of its articles talk about abortion and adoption, which are practices opposed by Islamists," she said.

Children, who participating in the workshop alongside officials, told experts from the Ministry of Education and the Public Security Department, as well as lawyers that they were doing a poor job in preventing child abuse.

An 11-year-old boy described to police officer Hussein Arabiyat incidents in which police physically abused children.

The participant said that in order to stop a fist fight, at the King Abdullah Gardens, which he himself had witnessed, police officers repeatedly slapped a young boy, without granting him the chance to explain.

In another case, he added, police officers did not intervene to stop a fist fight. Instead, he said, the officers started encouraging the fight by cheering them on.

Many of the children inquired about laws that prevent, or curtail, domestic violence.

In reply, Ms. Ishaq said the law includes an article that gives the family the right to discipline their children, while police can only intervene if the abuse results in the child being hospitalised.

Even in these cases, she added, children are too afraid of their families to tell authorities the truth.

One solution to the prob-

lem, she said, was that children should have access to centres specialised in dealing with abuse, where professional advice can be obtained. Unfortunately, these centres are not available in Jordan, she said.

"If abuse against a child continues within his/her family circle the child should be placed with foster families."

At present the only other options for shelter for victims of abuse are orphanages, Ms. Ishaq said.

Ahmad, a 12-year-old, revealed a ten-centimetre scar on his elbow.

He explained that his father, clinically diagnosed as mentally handicapped, had pushed him towards a window, and that the broken glass penetrated his flesh deeply enough to expose the bone.

It was not until the mother came home that the child was given medical attention.

Fear of being "butchered" kept Ahmad from telling officials the truth.

"The father spent some time in Fuhais Psychiatric Hospital, but was released because the hospital deemed him fit to return home. But I think he should go back (to the hospital) because he is a danger to his children," said Feryal Saleh, director of the Centre for Social Development, who read the father's medical report.

Psychiatrist Mohammed Khalaf said that violence is

a catalyst in developing different psychological disorders in children.

He said children exposed to violence become violent themselves.

Eleven-year-old Manal, Ahmad's eldest sister, still cannot read or write. She told the Jordan Times that whenever her father beats her with an iron chain, she goes to school and beats her schoolmates.

She has been expelled from several schools.

"Late at night, I think about why I hit them. I know they don't deserve it," she said.

Manal's counsellor for the past two years, who asked not to be identified, said the only way to save Manal is to put her in an orphanage, where her father can not reach her.

Children who are forced out into the streets to beg by their families are also suffering abuse.

Police officer Arabiyat said although this is the responsibility of the ministry of social development, police officers do cooperate with the ministry.

"Children are picked up from the streets and are sent to the ministry where their cases are studied, and depending on the situation, a monthly income is provided for the family," he said.

Families caught sending their children to beg on the streets are fined JD 2, the officer said.

If the child is repeatedly

picked up by the authorities, he or she might be taken from the family and placed in an orphanage, he added.

Mothers attending the workshop told the Jordan Times that although they believe that street and school violence should be dealt with, they did not consider corporal punishment as abuse, but rather as a form of "family guidance."

They said they were worried that an open discussion of this kind might create a rift between children and their families.

All 50 children who participated in the event conducted their own research on street, school and domestic violence.

They also studied the Jordanian law on the child's right and have met with peers who themselves have been victims of abuse.

At the end of the workshop the children presented their recommendations, which included:

—An awareness campaign to inform children of their rights, should be introduced in children's programmes on JTV and to be included in the school syllabus.

—Parents and police officers should be involved in seminars designed to explain the effect of violence on developing the child's personality.

—A compulsory course on child psychology for teachers.

Werner Bartschi to ponder and play

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Embassy of Switzerland in Amman have invited a very special pianist to perform in Amman.

Werner Bartschi is an artist who is constantly questioning the concert approach, searching for ways to make it more spontaneous, communicative

and natural. Every aspect of the performance, whether technical or aesthetic is rethought.

A known musician, pedagogue and interpreter of a vast repertoire, Werner Bartschi is also a composer.

In addition to works by Anton Webern, Frederic Chopin, Sergei Prokofiev, Robert Schumann and Othmar Schoeck, he will play two of his own compositions: an Etude-Impromptu

and Fruhmorgens am Daubensee.

In 1983, Mr. Bartschi won the coveted, French "Grand Prix du Disque," awarded by the prestigious Academie Francaise, for his exceptional recordings.

The concert will take place at the Amman Baccalaureate School theatre, tonight at 8:00, and is a presentation of Pro Helvetia Arts Council of Switzerland.

News in Brief

Government asked to prepare 1996 staffing requirements

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday issued a circular asking all ministries and government departments to prepare a staffing needs list for 1996. The documents should include an organisations structure, job descriptions and justification for the additional staff requirements. The circular said the documents must be submitted to the secretaries general or department heads, as appropriate. The documents will be forwarded to task forces for discussion with heads of the respective administration units, and then forwarded to the Budget Department no later than end of June, 1996 for review by another task force.

UNESCO seeks to establish special regional office

AMMAN (Petra)—Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural

Organisation (UNESCO) representative in Jordan Abdul Qader Atrash Sunday discussed the possible establishment of a regional office within the UNESCO Amman office to handle cultural matters in the Arab region. According to UNESCO officials, Jordan and UNESCO will sign an agreement on establishing the new office in the next two months. The two officials also discussed Jordan's participation in the UNESCO general meeting in Paris due to start on Oct. 25. Also Sunday, Mr. Rawabdeh met with Donat Stahl, the new area director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to discuss the agency's projects in comprehensive education in the Arab World. Mr. Rawabdeh urged UNICEF to link its projects in Jordan with the country's own comprehensive educational schemes to improve the quality of life in the less fortunate areas. Mrs. Stahl said UNICEF is creating a regional task force on comprehensive education and requested that Jordan name its representative in this task force. Discussions also covered prospects of UNICEF providing assistance to Jordanian schools in rural regions, especially on transportation and health services for students.

PIANO RECITAL

* By Swiss pianist Werner Bartschi at the Amman Baccalaureate School Theatre at 8:00 p.m.

FILMS

* "Tout Ça... Pour Ça," at the French Cultural Centre, at 8:00 p.m.

* Polish film, "Love in Germany," at the Phoenix Gallery, at 7:30 p.m.

DIALOGUE

* Dialogue on Yemeni music with Dr. Nizar Ghanem at the Phoenix Gallery, at 6:30 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Golding's Lord of the Flies," at the British Council, by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Janet Venn-Brown at Allia Art Gallery.

* Works by Luis Azcarate at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman.

* A Retrospective Exhibition of Sculptures and Drawings (1965-1995) by Mona Saudi at Darat Al Furun.

* Graphic design by Iraqi artist Kazem Shamhoud at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina.

* Painting and sculpture by Rafiq Lahham and Laila Al Turk at the Italian Language Centre Gallery, Shmeisani.

* Selected works by the young and the established at The Gallery, Hotel Inter-Continental.

* Works by Lamia Abdel Sahib and Samer Ousama entitled "Aux Sources Orientales de la Fontaine," at the French Cultural Centre.

French fables from an oriental past painted by oriental artists of today

By Beatrix Immenkamp
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An exhibition of illustrations of fables of the French writer La Fontaine in memory of the 300th anniversary of his death is drawing to a close at the French Cultural Centre in Amman.

The aim of the exhibition on "The Oriental Sources of La Fontaine" and the accompanying book is to show the extent to which La Fontaine relied on inspiration from oriental culture, according to the organisers.

The author of poems, songs, drama pieces, stories, opera librettos and a novel, who is considered one of the greatest French writers of the 17th century, is best remembered today for his fables, vignettes of morale and social satire in which animals speak and act like human beings.

The latter half of La Fontaine's 240 fables were inspired by "oriental sources", in particular the book of Kalila and Dimna, also known as the Book of Animals, which was translated into Arabic from Indi-

an and Persian by Ibn Al Muqaffa around the 12th century.

The 19 paintings exhibited at the French Cultural Centre in Amman are the works of two Iraqi artists living in Jordan who were commissioned by the centre to illustrate some of La Fontaine's "fables of oriental origin".

Commenting on the origin of the book accompanying the exhibition, Gerard Martinez, director of the French Cultural Centre, told the Jordan Times: "work on La Fontaine's fables of oriental origin revealed the close resemblance of some of them to stories in Kalila and Dimna."

At that point, my wife Marie and I had the idea of publishing a book where La Fontaine's fables would appear alongside the original stories which inspired them."

The result is a large book, beautifully illustrated with the 19 paintings of Iraqi artists Lamia Abdel-Sahib and Samer Ousama, where La Fontaine's stories, in French, appear side by side the original stories in

Kalila and Dimna, printed in Arabic.

In the appendix, La Fontaine's stories are printed in Arabic and the stories from Kalila and Dimna appear in French, allowing French readers access to the stories from Kalila and Dimna and Arabic readers access to the stories of La Fontaine," Mr. Martinez adds.

The idea behind the book is to build a bridge between the two cultures, Arab and French, showing the extent to which one influenced the other.

According to Mr. Martinez, the book will also be distributed in France, where it will have the specific benefit of helping young people from North African countries living in France realize that their Arab culture is important to French culture, as well as making French youngsters understand that a famous French author was inspired by Arabic sources.

The exhibition, which will close on Tuesday, will travel to Beirut, Nantes (France), Cairo, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Doha over



The fish and the cormorant, by Lamia Abdel-Sahib

the next months. An exhibition of the works of Iraqi painter

Shaker Hassan Said will open at the French Cultural Centre on Wednesday.

Russian planes bomb Chechen villages after talks collapse

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian warplanes have bombed villages in south-eastern Chechnya killing 17 people, in what Chechen separatists said Sunday was a show of "cruelty" by the new Russian military commander, a week after a bomb attack which killed his predecessor.

Chechen independence fighters quoted Sunday by Moscow Echo radio station said the raids carried out Saturday against the villages of Dargo and Belgatoy had also left at least 23 people wounded.

Movladi Udugov, spokesman for the self-proclaimed Chechen independent government, said eight warplanes and six Mi-24 helicopter gunships took part in the sequence of three raids on the villages which lie in an area which Russian troops have so far failed to conquer in their 10-month bid to crush Chechen separatism.

"According to a first available information, the raids left 17 dead and 23 wounded, including eight seriously hurt," Mr. Udugov told Moscow Echo.

Dargo is the stronghold of Chechen warlord Shamil Bassayev who gained world-wide notoriety for leading a bloody hostage-taking operation in the

Russian town of Budennovsk in June.

However Mr. Bassayev was not in Dargo Saturday. He was in Shali, a town about 30 kilometres south of Grozny, where he burst into a "round table" organised by a pro-Russian Chechen group, to call for reconciliation among Chechens.

In Moscow, the Defence Ministry refused to either confirm or deny the Chechnya raids, Interfax News Agency said.

In another incident related by Mr. Udugov, "four people — three women and a girl — were killed at a Russian checkpoint on the road out of Bamut" in western Chechnya when their car came under a hail of automatic fire.

However Interfax quoted him as saying: "The Chechen side has never renounced and will not give up on reconciliation."

A week ago, 28 people were killed in air raids on Roshni-Chu in western Chechnya but Moscow denied that Russian forces were responsible and said planes "from Azerbaijan" had attacked the town.

The difficult peace process begun in Chechnya as a result of the Budennovsk tragedy has run into deadlock after the suspen-

sion of talks on implementing a demilitarisation accord reached on July 1.

The talks were broken off early last week following the Oct. 6 bomb blast in Grozny in which the former commander of Russian forces in Chechnya, General Anatoly Romanov was badly injured.

His successor General Anatoly Shkirko took over Thursday.

Mr. Udugov said the raids on Dargo and Belgatoy were Gen. Shkirko's way of "showing his cruelty" after the attack on Gen. Romanov.

"We don't believe Russian officers when they say they had nothing to do with these attacks. In fact, the Russian troops have not stopped their military actions and are supported by artillery and aviation," the Chechen spokesman said.

On Friday, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said he "would not veer from the path of peace" in Chechnya despite the attack on Gen. Romanov.

"The federal government will not veer from the path to peace laid down for a settlement of the Chechen question, even if (Chechen independence leader) Dzhokhar Dudayev is pushing us in other directions," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Meanwhile the head of a European mission monitoring Russia's war in break-away Chechnya Saturday condemned bombing strikes on a village he visited outside Grozny, calling them unjustifiable.

Sandor Meszaros, lead representative in the Chechen capital for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said he was shocked by what he saw the previous day in Roshni-Chu, west of Grozny.

Despite repeated Russian denials of aerial attacks on the village last Sunday, Mr. Meszaros confirmed to journalists at a Grozny news conference that a bombing strike had occurred.

He saw dozens of destroyed or damaged houses, told of the reported deaths of 28 villagers, and said residents told him the Russians had attacked in eight assault planes, dropping bombs, firing from submachine guns and firing several dozen missiles.

"I do not know whether there were militants in the village or not, but such an action cannot be justified," Mr. Meszaros was quoted by the Interfax News Agency as saying.



Former Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi (right) meets with South African President Nelson Mandela in Pretoria (AFP photo)

Savimbi regrets his 1992 return to war

LUSAKA (Agencies) — Angolan former rebel leader Jonas Savimbi said here Sunday that he regretted plunging his country back into civil war in 1992, saying that if he had been committed to peace then as he was today, a resumption of hostilities could have been avoided.

At the end of a tour of southern Africa to promote his new image as a man of peace, Mr. Savimbi told a press conference that he no longer felt disappointed at not being elected president in 1992.

He said he was happy with the post he has been offered.

"I am not disappointed with the turn of events but what I regret deeply in my 37 years of fighting, is the fighting we began in 1992, because this could have been avoided had we exhibited the same political will as today," said the 61-year-old leader of the main opposition National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

He added: "The highest office in our country is to have peace, my troops and officers have all accepted that it is better we play a constructive role other than to have the post of president."

Mr. Savimbi shattered Angola's hopes for peace when he went back to a bush war after rejecting UNITA's loss in general and presidential elections in 1992 though they had been declared free and fair by the United Nations.

After the Lusaka protocol for peace signed here last November, he has been offered the second vice presidency of the country by his war-time rival President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, in a government of national unity to be set up in January.

UNITA will also have four cabinet and seven deputy ministerial posts.

Mr. Savimbi has been visiting some southern African states to seek support for his commitment to peace and confidence in the Lusaka protocol which is running behind schedule at

almost all stages.

He returned to his Bailundo headquarters of the central Angolan highlands saying he was a "very happy and satisfied" man and his tour had enriched his relations with southern African heads-of-government.

Mr. Savimbi Saturday called the presence of South African mercenaries on Angolan soil "an embarrassing problem" for President Nelson Mandela's government.

"The fact is that we Angolans don't need mercenaries in our country at this stage, and the South African government doesn't need them anywhere," Mr. Savimbi said in an interview with Associated Press Television after meeting Mr. Mandela.

A South African company, Executive Outcomes, has recruited former members of the apartheid-era armed forces who fought in bush wars in Angola, Namibia and Mozambique to train — critics say lead — combatants in Angola and Sierra Leone.

In Angola, the mercenaries are credited with tipping the balance in favour of President Dos Santos' army last year and forcing Mr. Savimbi to sign a new peace accord.

Mr. Savimbi met Mr. Mandela during his swing through southern African countries.

Mr. Savimbi refused in the APTV interview to condemn Mr. Mandela's government for allowing the mercenaries to operate, but said that the situation should be "eased."

"It is a fact that no one can approve of mercenaries anywhere on the African continent," Mr. Savimbi said. "These activities are contrary to the spirit of peace and reconciliation in the region."

Mr. Savimbi's meeting with Mr. Mandela was largely ceremonial and followed more substantive talks Friday with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Mr. Mandela's main diplomatic troubleshooter.

Russia to sell its single aircraft carrier to India

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia may sell its last aircraft carrier still in service to India, an official said Saturday.

The carrier Admiral Kuznetsov has been in the Northern Fleet since 1990. It is capable of carrying up to 50 SU-27 and MiG-29 fighter jets and has a displacement of nearly 70,000 tonnes.

The ITAR-TASS news agency quoted an unidentified official with the state arms-trading company Rosvooruzheniye who said Russia intends to sell it to India, although South Korea and other countries also have shown interest.

Three smaller carriers of an older type — the Kiev, Minsk and Novorossiysk — have been mothballed in recent years, and the navy officials have announced they would be sold for scrap. Another vessel of the same type, Admiral Gorskoy, is now under repairs and also offered for sale.

The official military daily Krasnaya Zvezda Saturday assailed plans to sell aircraft carriers, saying Russia needs them to remain a great naval power.

German CDU wonders about the post-Kohl era

BONN (R) — Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) open their annual congress Monday so overshadowed by the German chancellor that the party's top maverick has warned it against developing a "Fuehrer cult."

Heiner Geissler, a long-time Kohl rival who heads the CDU's liberal wing, angered many colleagues with his overblown analogy and may lose his post as vice-chairman of the party's faction in parliament because of it.

His criticism, though, struck at the heart of the CDU's problem. Now 13 years in power, the party is so far ahead in the polls that it can look forward to ruling into the next century — as long as Mr. Kohl, 65, stays at the top.

But what happens when he's gone? How should the party prepare for the post-Kohl era? Several CDU thinkers more tactful than Mr. Geissler are asking the same questions.

"The CDU cannot become a party with a Fuehrer cult fixed on one person," Mr. Geissler declared last week in the Third Reich parallel that prompted protests from fellow deputies.

"Otherwise, it would burst like pricked balloon when that person is no longer there," he told the weekly Die Woche.

Recent opinion polls support Mr. Geissler's concerns.

The CDU, with its CSU sister party in Bavaria, could win an absolute majority of parliamentary seats if an election were held today. It leads the disoriented Social Democrats by 45 to 32 per cent, the electoral research group said.

But asked if it would do as well without Mr. Kohl, 65 per cent of those queried said no. Even more telling, 78 per cent of CDU members surveyed agreed their party would be worse off without the veteran leader, the Forsa polling group reported.

"Nobody will talk openly about Kohl's future at the congress," predicted one CDU official who, like many others in Bonn, assumes but is not sure that Europe's longest-serving leader will seek reelection in 1998. Mr. Kohl refuses to comment.

The three-day meeting in Karlsruhe, the southwestern city where Germany's Supreme Court stands, will indirectly address the issue Wednesday when it votes on introducing quotas for women and party primaries to pick future candidates.

Mr. Kohl, concerned that CDU support is weakest among younger women, wants one-third of all party posts and candidate slots reserved for female members. This is expected to pass despite strong doubts among the conservative male majority.

He is less enthusiastic about the primaries proposed by CDU General Secretary Peter Hintze to make the party more open to its grass roots and thus more attractive for new members.

The CDU's powerful parliamentary leader Wolfgang Schaueble and several cabinet members also oppose primaries.

A younger generation of CDU leaders now rising in the ranks of state politics wants to go beyond these cautious reforms.

"The party leadership isn't flexible enough to make the CDU ready for the challenges of the next century," says Ole Von Beust, 40, CDU leader in Hamburg's city hall. "Too many people there want to rest on Kohl's laurels."

15 make stage 3 of Chopin Competition

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Three Russians, three Italians and two Americans are among 15 qualifiers for stage three of the prestigious Frederic Chopin Competition for young pianists, the jury announced. The announcement reduces the field for the \$25,000 prize from 130 in the Oct. 2-22 competition. "I am very excited and very happy. It's a relief at least," said Gabriela Montero of Miami, one of the two Americans. "You can relax a bit (in the next stage). There are very difficult pieces, but very expressive," said the 25-year-old Venezuela-born Montero. The competition, first held in 1927, pays homage to the 19th-century Polish-born composer and typically launches international careers. Full of temperament and praised by critics, Montero said she was looking forward to playing her favourite Mazurkas — demanding not only impeccable technique but also the ability to expose Chopin's emotions. This year's favourite with audiences has been Alexei Sultanov, a 26-year-old Russian. He was the only competitor to have a performance interrupted by applause.

Baywatch's Pamela Anderson hospitalised

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (R) — Pamela Anderson, the buxom blonde star of TV's Baywatch, was treated in a hospital Friday for "flu-like symptoms." A spokeswoman for St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica said Anderson, 27, was undergoing tests and was "doing fine." She said the actress was sent to the hospital by her doctor after she complained of feeling unwell at home Thursday night. Anderson, who recently suffered a miscarriage, is married to Tommy Lee, drummer with the heavy metal rock band Motley Crue.

Preacher may be prosecuted for punching saint

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — An Evangelical preacher who punched and kicked an effigy of Brazil's patron saint on television could be taken to court for his disrespect, TV Globo said Saturday. A Rio judge is investigating the incident on a television show Thursday that has angered not only Brazilian Catholics but followers of other faiths as well. The preacher attacked the effigy of Our Lady of Aparecida on the day Brazil honours her with a national holiday.

Man fined for duck noises

CANBERRA (R) — An Australian man has been fined \$1,500 for quacking like a duck on his radio transmitter, a court official in the Tasmanian town of Launceston said. Don Desmond Davey, 57, was convicted for broadcasting something that was not speech, the official said. Mr. Davey pleaded guilty to 16 charges over the operation and possession of unlicensed radio communications equipment and was also ordered to hand over his radio.

Athens cracks down on litter

ATHENS (AFP) — Authorities in the historic but polluted Greek capital, have brought in stiff fines for citizens who leave litter and transform open spaces into unofficial rubbish tips. Mayor Dimitris Avramopoulos announced the fines and ordered Athenians to clean up their yards and gardens as well.

Thousands flee Dhaka ahead of new strike

DHAKA (AFP) — Amidst new attempts to bring the prime minister and opposition leader to the negotiating table, Bangladesh braced for new violence in a four-day general strike from Monday against the government of Khaleda Zia.

Thousands of people fled Dhaka, some calling it a "strike holiday," while those remaining in the capital took precautions against disturbances.

Newspapers said those wealthy enough were going abroad, especially to neighbouring India, and most others to homes outside Dhaka.

"People are gripped by panic, fearing violence during the strike," said the mass circulation Janakantha daily.

But the newspaper highlighted hopes for moves by diplomats and a group of eminent citizens to end the 18-month political crisis caused by the opposition

campaign to force Mrs. Zia to stand down.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia Saturday called on opposition Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina Wajed, and other rivals, to hold talks instead of resorting to anti-government action.

"Come, let us talk at my office, parliament or any other place" to end the crisis, she told a rally in the northern district of Natore, state-run Bangladesh Television reported.

This strike will be the longest in a series called by the opposition in support of its demand that Mrs. Zia resign and allow elections under a caretaker government. Nearly all have been marked by clashes.

But there are growing signs of behind-the-scenes pressure to end the political conflict.

A group of eminent citizens that has met Mrs. Zia also held talks with Mrs. Wajed, according to politi-

cal sources, in an attempt to stop the crisis deepening. The sources said they could meet the prime minister again at any time.

The Daily Star newspaper, without giving details, said the acting general secretary of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Abdul Manan Bhuiyan, and Home Minister Abdul Manin Chowdhury met late Saturday with the mayor of Dhaka, Muhammad Hanif, and a senior Awami League leader.

On top of popular fears over the loss of life and property in the chaos, the business community is increasingly concerned at the effect on the economy.

Salman Rahman, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry told a seminar that politicians could face the wrath of the people. "The silent majority are waking up," he warned.

"The politicians are increasingly losing their respect by their actions which is a power struggle at the cost of the nation," said one businessman, requesting anonymity.

The opposition maintains it would hold talks and allow Mrs. Zia to complete her five-year term if she agreed to let a caretaker government oversee the next general elections due in 1996.

Mrs. Wajed's party and other opposition groups — the Jani Party of jailed former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad and the Muslim fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami — resigned their parliamentary seats in December.

Opposition MPs say fair polls were impossible under Mrs. Zia. But the prime minister has rejected the demands as "unconstitutional," though she says she would step down 30 days ahead of polls.

Poll shows solid gains for Quebec separatists

MONTREAL (R) — A new poll released Saturday showed solid gains for Quebec separatists in the week after their most popular leader, Lucien Bouchard, was given more prominence in the campaign for the Oct. 30 referendum.

The Leger Leger poll said the yes side — favouring Quebec separation from Canada — had picked up two percentage points and pulled ahead, though they were still marginally behind after the allocation of undecided voters.

"This is the first time that it's possible for the sovereigntists to see a victory for the yes side," Jean-Marc Leger, president of group Leger Leger said.

"It also ends suggestions that the no side would crush the sovereigntists," he said. The poll was commissioned for the Toronto Globe and Mail and Journal De Montreal newspapers.

It showed 45 per cent of Quebecers voting yes and

42.4 per cent voting no, with 1.6 per cent not voting, 4.8 per cent undecided and 6.2 per cent not answering. A week ago, 42.9 per cent said yes and 43.7 per cent no.

After allocating those who were undecided and did not answer, the no side was ahead 50.8 per cent to 49.2 per cent, having slipped from 52.8 per cent to 47.2 per cent a week ago.

This follows a Gallup poll released Friday night showing the no side leading 43 to 39 per cent, or 53 to 47 per cent after apportioning undecided voters.

Pollsters say undecided voters tend to vote more for the status quo as they appear more concerned about the possible consequences of pulling out of Canada.

Leger Leger polls have tended to show more strength for the separatists than those by other major polling firms, but the change from the last poll

was unmistakable.

Mr. Leger said the improvement in the yes side's position largely reflected the fact that Mr. Bouchard has replaced less-popular Premier Jacques Parizeau as the visible head of the sovereigntist campaign.

"It was a good week, yes," Mr. Bouchard, leader of the Bloc Quebecois in the federal parliament, told an ebullient gathering Friday. "Next week is going to be even better."

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, fighting to keep Canada together, told reporters in Montreal he was not at all concerned, and pointed to the defeat of the last sovereignty referendum in 1980.

"Last time it was much closer than this time, and the result was 60-40 (in favour of unity)," he said.

Asked if he would imitate Mr. Bouchard in being more active on the campaign trail, Mr. Chretien said no.

"The strategy of Mr. Bouchard was to destroy us in the House of Commons. That was given three weeks, and it was he that left (the battlefield) first. So that strategy wasn't working," he said. Ours is working and we don't need to change.

Some 73.6 per cent of the respondents said Mr. Parizeau was right to have named Mr. Bouchard a week ago as the chief negotiator of an economic and political partnership with the rest of Canada in the event of a separatist victory.

The referendum will ask Quebecers if Quebec should become sovereign after offering — not necessarily achieving — a new economic and political partnership with Canada.

The Leger poll was conducted from Oct. 8-12 over 1,002 voters, with a plus or minus 3.1 per cent margin of error 19 times out of 20.

Opposition leader arrested over Mugabe murder plot

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Veteran opposition leader Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole was arrested Saturday for suspected links to a plot to assassinate President Robert Mugabe, police said.

The fiery, eccentric preacher, 75, was taken from his Harare home following disclosures Tuesday that an armed group claiming loyalty to his small

party planned to ambush Mr. Mugabe's motorcade. Police spokesman Enock Ngunwenya said Rev. Sithole, a member of parliament, was being questioned about the alleged plot involving two men charged with conspiracy to commit murder and engage in acts of terrorism and sabotage.

Rev. Sithole, an independent congregationalist minister, helped found what is

now Zimbabwe's governing party in the 1960s but split with Mr. Mugabe shortly after the end of white minority rule in 1980.

Rev. Sithole spent a decade in self-imposed exile in the United States after being accused of plotting an uprising against Mr. Mugabe's government. He returned to Zimbabwe in 1992.

His Zimbabwe African

National Union-Ndonga Party holds the only two opposition seats in the 150-seat parliament.

On Tuesday, prosecutors said that Simba Mhlanga, 30, alleged commander of the Chimwenje Freedom Fighters, a little-known dissident group, was accused of leading at least 11 men on a mission to attack Mr. Mugabe's motorcade on Aug. 18.

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Koreans thought Moscow hijacker was prankster

SEOUL (R) — A group of South Koreans who escaped unhurt from a 10-hour hostage drama in central Moscow thought at first the man who hijacked their bus was a prankster, officials and news reports said Sunday.

The South Koreans, employees of the Hyundai Electronics Industries Co., were all in good shape and would go ahead with a planned tour of Germany, Hyundai spokesman Cho Won-Sang said in Seoul. "We were panicked when we heard the news about the hijacking," Mr. Cho said of a drama in which 24 Hyundai employees, two Korean guides and a Russian driver were held hostage on a tourist bus. The gunman had released

all but four people by the time Russian police stormed the bus to kill the man and free the remaining hostages Sunday.

"Despite the incident, we will let them travel to Germany to look around industrial facilities there as we have confirmed that they are in good health," Mr. Cho told Reuters.

The South Korean government expressed gratitude to Moscow for its "quick" cooperation and the successful police operation to rescue the hostages.

"Our government expresses deep gratitude to the Russian government," Foreign Ministry spokesman Suh Dae-Won said in a statement.

In an interview with South Korean correspondents in

Moscow, one of the hostages, Yoon Dong-Hyon, said a masked man aimed a pistol at the group and shouted "draw the curtain" after they got on the bus near the Kremlin.

"We thought it was a joke and all laughed," Yoon was quoted as saying by South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

"Then the guy fired a warning shot towards the ceiling. We realised it was serious and gestured to vendors around the bus that we were in danger but they thought we were saying hello," he was quoted as saying.

Yoon said two of the 26 managed to escape during the confusion. The bus was surrounded by police in about 20 minutes, he said.

The hijacker, speaking to the tourists through their Russian-speaking guide, assured them that they would not be hurt if he got a ransom of \$10 million, Yoon said.

"He let us smoke and sleep," said Yoon, one of the hostages freed early on.

Before Yoon was released, the gunman displayed a package he was carrying and said it was a bomb which he would set off if the hostages did not cooperate.

Yoon denied Russian reports the hijacker was from North Korea. "He was masked but he definitely had a Caucasian nose," he was quoted as saying.

The Hyundai employees left Seoul Friday for a week-long trip to Moscow and Germany.

Seoul asks U.S. to slow down in rapprochement with Pyongyang

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea has asked Washington to slow down in seeking a rapprochement with North Korea, citing the Communist nation's refusal to improve inter-Korean relations, reports said Sunday.

Seoul has sent a strong note to Washington in a bid to persuade U.S. officials from hastily opening a liaison office in Pyongyang, which remains unwilling to improve ties with South Korea, the Chosun-Illbo newspaper said.

It said there was a widespread feeling of unease among South Korean officials over Washington's push for closer ties with North Korea, the newspaper said.

"Washington seems to make haste with the opening of a diplomatic office in Pyongyang," a government source was quoted by the paper as saying.

In related remarks published Sunday by the New York Times, South Korean President Kim Young-Sam expressed concern over the North's hardline stance, calling it "a very difficult partner to deal with."

"Our concern is that

because of their desperation or frustration about their declining economy, they may start on a course of adventurous military provocation, Mr. Kim was quoted as saying.

Referring to South Korea's shipment of 150,000 tonnes of free rice to North Korea flood victims, Mr. Kim said he felt betrayed and disappointed by Pyongyang.

After a brief thaw created by the rice shipments which started in June, inter-Korean relations turned frosty again following the breakdown of rice talks between the two Koreas in Beijing three weeks ago.

Seoul contends that inter-Korean talks are a prerequisite to U.S.-North Korean normalisation under their landmark accord concluded a year ago, which defused a crisis over the North's controversial nuclear programme.

Under the Geneva accord, the North closed suspected nuclear facilities in return for a promise by Washington of diplomatic and economic benefits.

As a first step, Washington and Pyongyang have agreed to open liaison offices in each other's capitals.

Meanwhile a South Korean official said Sunday President Kim has urged Japan to repent fully for the atrocities it committed against Koreans before and during World War II.

"I have future-oriented thoughts basically. But Japan... should make full repentance for its past wrongdoings," an official at the prime minister's office quoted Mr. Kim as telling a dinner meeting with his cabinet ministers Saturday.

Mr. Kim, disclosing the contents of his interview with the New York Times earlier Saturday, told the ministers that the division of the Korean peninsula had resulted from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of Korea, the official said.

Mr. Kim also criticised Japan's direct talks with North Korea on rice "over the heads" of South Korea. He said it undermined Seoul's efforts towards unification of the two Koreas, still technically at war since the 1950-53 Korean War.

Mr. Kim's comment was apparently in response to recent remarks made by Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama on Tokyo's position about a

1910 treaty under which Japan colonised Korea.

On Oct. 5, Mr. Murayama told parliament the treaty was signed and implemented in a technically valid manner, judging from international relations and other circumstances at the time.

Mr. Murayama Friday moved to head off a furore over his remarks by saying the annexation treaty was signed on an "unequal footing".

"I don't think the two countries stood on an equal footing in signing the annexation treaty," Mr. Murayama told parliament's lower house budget committee.

In the parliamentary session, Mr. Murayama said Japan must squarely face history and reflect on what it had done to the Korean people in order to build "friendly relations".

Nevertheless, Mr. Murayama's remarks triggered fierce criticism from both South and North Korea where bitter memories remain of Japan's 35 years of colonial rule, which ended in 1945 with Tokyo's defeat in World War II.

Report: Russian criminals behind theft of beryllium

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia's notorious organised crime syndicates were behind the theft in 1993 of radioactive beryllium from a Russian nuclear laboratory and the failed attempt to sell the material in the West, according to a magazine and broadcast report.

The crime syndicates, known as "Mafiya," appear to be deeply involved in the theft and smuggling of nuclear-related materials out of Russia for sale to the highest bidder, the report said.

The mysterious beryllium shipment was seized by

police in Lithuania and remains today in the bank vault where it was first discovered, according to the report. Seizure of the material was reported widely in 1993.

But a five-month investigation by U.S. News and World Report and CBS' "60 Minutes" programme has shed additional light on the theft. The report is to be aired by CBS Sunday and is featured in the magazine issue appearing on newsstands Monday.

According to the report, the smugglers were preparing to sell the beryllium to

an Austrian middleman who in turn had a mystery buyer who was ready to pay as much as \$24 million for the material, 10 times its legitimate market value. The buyer, although never identified, was said to be Korean, according to the report.

Beryllium, which is used in missile guidance systems and for other military purposes, is a highly efficient neutron reflector, according to nuclear scientists. That makes it valuable for building more efficient nuclear warheads or a smaller nuclear reactor.

Russian and U.S. authorities have said frequently that they believe the greatest concern about the smuggling of nuclear materials out of the former Soviet Union stems from possible thefts by plant workers, disgruntled scientists or amateur criminals.

But the beryllium case shows that organised crime also is deeply involved, according to the magazine and television report.

The journalists found that a trading firm in Moscow linked to the Russian "Mafiya" handled the export of the beryllium.

SIEMENS AG - Jordan Branch is proud to announce the signing of the contract for the installation of Digital telephone exchanges for 300000 lines



On Oct. 12, 1995, the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has signed an agreement with Siemens AG, to install digital telephone exchanges in several areas all around Jordan at a cost of JD 26 million within the framework of the National Telecommunication program.

Siemens will implement the project within 24 months.

The agreement was signed by TCC Director General Mr. Walid Dweik and Director International Sales Mr. F. Raffelsberger on behalf of Siemens AG in the presence of the Chairman of the board of TCC Mr. Jamal Saraireh, the Minister of Post and Communication and the Chairman of the supervisory board of Siemens AG, Dr. Hermann Franz.

SIEMENS

Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Parades before the fact

IRAQI SCHOOLCHILDREN'S rehearsal of victory parades for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, well before the results of yesterday's referendum were announced, indicates the shallowness with which the costly exercise was being conducted. The songs of adulation for the Iraqi leader, coupled with uninhibited predictions by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) that support for President Saddam Hussein would amount to 100 per cent will not be able to hide the fact that Iraq today is no less deprived of the most elementary features of real pluralistic democracy.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz attempted, in vain, to dispel the belief that the referendum was totally unnecessary when he admitted that his country was not aiming for the type of democracy that is found in the West for instance. While it is true that developing countries such as Iraq cannot be expected to enjoy that kind of democracy, we would have expected that what the Iraqi people did and do yearn for, before and now, is at least the beginning of a democratic process that is basically derived from international norms and standards.

Baghdad has signed and ratified so many international human rights conventions and treaties, which put Iraq in the group of nations that support basic freedoms and liberties for their peoples. Yet the realities in our sister country demonstrate beyond a shadow of doubt that it is no way near the path of functional democracy, not now nor in the immediate future. No matter what the outcome of Sunday's plebiscite is, therefore, it would be never legitimate or credible enough to establish one way or another the free choice of the Iraqi people. The only sensible way left for Iraq is to first dismantle the police state, allow the establishment of political parties, and then conduct free parliamentary elections based on pluralism and the collective rights of all Iraqis.

We agree that all efforts should be concentrated on lifting the sanctions against Iraq as a top priority. Inching towards true democracy, though, could only help that cause — not undermine it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A writer in Al Ra'i daily Sunday attacked a report by Rolf Ekeus, the United Nations special envoy overseeing the dismantling of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, in which he recommends that sanctions remain imposed on Iraq for fear of its future ability to produce nuclear and chemical weapons. Tareq Masarweh said that because of the report, Iraq would not be permitted to sell oil, even though its people are suffering from a lack of funds for food and medicine. The maintenance of sanctions is inhibiting Iraq's ability to develop industrially, culturally and socially and is forcing the Iraqis to concede to American terms, added the writer. This act of genocide, wrote Mr. Masarweh, is the objective of the United States, which is employing the U.N. and its envoy to execute Washington's orders and exterminate millions of Iraqi citizens. Condemning the U.N. Security Council's policy on Iraq, the writer said that the Council was acting as an accessory to a crime committed against the Arab people.

By announcing that national unity was one of Jordan's primary priorities and by stressing that refugee rights would be safeguarded, King Hussein ended rumours in the press concerning the future of refugee-camp residents, said Al Dustour daily Sunday. The paper said that King Hussein's emphasis on national unity, no matter the origin of a Jordanian citizen, had reassured tens of thousands of camp inhabitants. Rumours of eviction had spread following a court ruling that restored its owners the land where Al Hussein camp is established, said the daily. The King's instructions to the government to solve the problem practically, has set every one's mind at rest, the paper added.

Human Rights File

What the future may hold for the West Bank

By Waleed M. Sadi

CALL ME a pessimist, but the more I think about it, the more I am convinced that come the third and final stage of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the whole peace process between the two sides will crumble like a house of cards. It is not only that the Israel body politic was evenly and dangerously divided over the limited and modest Oslo II accord that has convinced me, but the tide of Israeli public opinion for peaceful accommodation with the Palestinians on the basis of Oslo I is fast eroding and turning hostile. The stature of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the architect of the Oslo I and all the subsequent agreements struck on its basis, is weakening to the extent that he may not be able to deliver much when the final stage of peace talks arrives. What Israel conceded to the PNA thus far is peanuts compared to what the Palestinians expected from them in the preceding years.

And when the day of reckoning arrives, the Israelis may find themselves unwilling or unable to deliver effective control to the PNA over much of the West Bank. Not to mention the thorny subject of Jerusalem, where the Israelis are united in not giving up sovereignty rights over East Jerusalem to the Arab. But by the time Israel and the PNA discover that what they have started cannot be completed, Israel would have concluded peace accords with all the Arab states including Syria and Lebanon, leaving the Palestinians alone, stranded and isolated. By then, the Palestinians will have no claim on the Arab countries, since it is they who separated from Arab ranks in the first place by secretly negotiating a separate agreement with

the Rabin government in 1993 in the Norwegian capital, Oslo.

Can the Palestinians then pick up the pieces and start all over again salvaging what could be saved? I think the PNA would do itself greater justice if it levels with the Palestinian people and tells them that the creation of an independent Palestinian state is not really on the cards, just as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has repeatedly reassured his people. The Labour-led government in Israel is aiming for the creation of Palestinian entities within the West Bank that are not necessarily connected even geographically. Rabin aims to keep the West Bank under effective Israeli control. This explains why the Israeli Peace Now movement has recently accused the Labour government of actually implementing on the ground what the Likud Party has advocated for decades. The current building and housing campaign in the Palestinian territories attests to the fact that there may be no real difference between Likud and Labour when it comes to the final Israeli vision of the West Bank.

We need to keep in mind that the territory of former Palestine is so tiny to national demands of both sides, and especially the ambitions of Israeli military strategists. It was reported and confirmed that the late Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan once called on his generals in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war to propose lines of demarcation to which Israeli troops may "safely" withdraw within the West Bank. The reply of the Israeli military then was that there were no such safe boundaries to which the Israeli army can withdraw. This, and other relat-

ed confirmed reports, would explain Jordan's failure to strike an equitable deal with Israel on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolution 242 for more than two decades of Israeli occupation.

If Israel, therefore, is unwilling to relinquish effective control to the Palestinians over much of the West Bank, then the two sides would eventually face a new situation that could re-impose the creation of a de facto binational state in the whole of Palestine. This is admittedly anathema to Rabin and like-minded Israelis who have decided to separate Israel from the Palestinians altogether. Still, if the majority of the Israelis would prefer to separate from the Palestinians, how can they reconcile this objective with their insistence on maintaining a firm grip over what they still call Judea and Samaria? Unless of course Israel has a long-term solution to the presence of millions of Arabs in these areas that we have not considered yet!

Frankly, I do not see the Israelis yielding on strategic control over the West Bank whether Israel is governed by Labour or Likud. One has to be naive to think otherwise. Most probably, though, what could emerge at the end of the day — on the basis of established evidence — is a formula under which the PNA would enjoy a semblance of control over most of the West Bank but remain a vassal of sorts of Israel until the day arrives in the future when a new generation of Israelis and Palestinians can strike a new deal for coexistence within a framework of a confederation along the lines of the Canadian confederation.

U.S. conspiracy trial: All found guilty

By Jane Hunter

AFTER SEVEN days of deliberations, a federal jury in New York convicted Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and nine co-defendants of conspiring to wage a terrorist war against the United States. Stunned defence attorneys, who said they would appeal against the verdicts, bitterly denounced the government for using fear to manipulate the jury and expressed disappointment that the jurors had succumbed to anti-Muslim stereotyping.

Among the 25 guilty counts, which the jury delivered in the early afternoon of October 1, were findings that the Egyptian cleric plotted to murder President Mubarak of Egypt and that Egyptian-born Sayyid Nosair murdered the Israeli right-wing extremist Meir Kahane in 1990. All 10 defendants were found guilty of the rarely used 19th century charge of seditious conspiracy. The government claimed the Kahane murder was the first act in that conspiracy, which also included the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre and plans to bomb buildings and tunnels.

Brushing aside the defence's claim that the bombing plots were manufactured and organised by FBI informant Emad Salem, the jurors embraced the government's theory on all but two counts. They acquitted Nosair and his cousin Ibrahim Elmagbrovi of a direct role in the bomb plots.

"They convicted everyone of everything," said Abdeen Jabara, one of the attorneys for Sheikh Abdul Rahman. "If our client had been acquitted on some counts, it would have shown that they'd really studied the evidence." The defence attorneys "totally misread the jury," Jabara told MEI after the announcement of the verdicts. The attorneys had hoped that the jury would be sceptical of the government's evidence, but

instead they "came in with all the prejudices they had from the media," Jabara said. "We just didn't expect them to come back this quickly."

In a statement after the verdict, U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White said the convictions were for criminal acts and had nothing to do with religion or ethnicity. Jabara said one of the issues to be raised on appeal will be the judge's refusal to ask potential jurors about their attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims.

Speaking to reporters outside the courthouse, attorney John Jacobs charged that the government had put the jurors "in fear for themselves. Their attitude was, 'we're never going to let these people go home again.'"

Reporters noted the unprecedentedly high level of security in the court that continued even after the trial stopped drawing spectators, and also that the jurors were quickly escorted away in a van. Almost immediately, authorities issued a highly publicised security alert for airports and U.S. installations abroad. News organisations quoted anonymous government sources both hinting that retaliatory attacks were anticipated and admitting that no specific threats had been received.

Defence attorneys said the government raised the jurors' focus with its focus on the World Trade Centre bombing, which was included in the conspiracy allegations even though none of the defendants had any

involvement beyond travelling in the same circles as the four men convicted of the attack last year. During the nine-month trial, the government spent three and a half weeks presenting "twisted metal and witnesses that were blown across the room, and all this at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing," noted Jabara. The prosecution's message, he said was clear: "We must not allow them to bring fear into our streets."

The sheikh faces a life sentence, as does Nosair. The other eight defendants face maximum sentences of 20 years on the seditious conspiracy counts, plus terms of between five and 10 years for each of the other charges.

Following the verdict, U.S. District Court Judge Michael Mukasey said he would sentence the men in late January. It remains to be seen whether Mukasey will impose the maximum sentences against all of the defendants. One, Puerto Rican Victor Alvarez, is mildly retarded. The involvement of Clement Hampton, an American, and Faris Khalafallah, a native of Sudan, was limited to seeking bomb components. Mohammad Salih also played a minor role. Three Sudanese immigrants, cousins Amir and Fadil Abdul Ghani and Tariq Al Hassan, were arrested as they, along with Alvarez, mixed bomb ingredients. The jury did not accept their explanation that they didn't know they were mak-

ing explosives for use on U.S. targets.

Grounds for appeal

In addition to Mukasey's handling of jury selection, the defendants' appeals, which will be filed after sentences are announced, will focus on the failure of the judge and the prosecutors to tell defence attorneys that, during opening statements, they were negotiating with the man they accused of being the ringleader of the conspiracy, Siddiq Ali. He was therefore privy to defence strategy when he subsequently agreed to a plea-bargain with the government; he did not testify at the trial.

The appeals will also raise the issue of the prosecution's use of tape recordings made by FBI informant Emad Salem. Some of the 20 FBI agents called by the defence testified that, although the bureau paid Salem over \$1 million for his work on the case, agents failed to supervise his taping. The defence contends that Salem discarded exculpatory statements. Another appeal issue, according to Jabara, will be Mukasey's refusal to allow testimony by Islamic experts.

Yet another appeal issue may be the government's use of Abdul Rahman's sermons to support its contention that his preachings were a coded call to a "jihad of urban terrorism." Constitutional scholars have fretted over the implications of this limitation on the right of free speech. Abdul Rahman's principal lawyer, Lynne Stewart, related that, as the verdicts were read, the blind cleric tried to comfort her. He said: "Don't cry. I'm not the first person to go to jail for his beliefs and I won't be the last. There are always pitfalls when you choose this road."

Middle East International

By Maurice Saatchi

IN THE spirit of the times, I would like to start with some nudity. Not because I have a missed vocation as editor of a tabloid newspaper. But because nudity is highly relevant to my theme — the democracy of information.

Democracy, of course, traces its heritage back to ancient Greece. The word itself can be roughly translated as rule by the people. A less well-known item from the Greek lexicon is the word *altheia*. It means truth. But the Greeks often translated the word "truth" as "the un-hidden". Or "the uncovered". Hence the long artistic tradition of representing truth as nude. Centuries ago, for the Greeks, the truth was "that which does not hide".

So if the Athenians were among us today, they would be delighted to discover that, over the years, there has been a huge increase in the amount of information that is un-hidden. The journey began in the days when information was in the hands of the few. There was no news, because nearly everything was hidden. And then news was invented: information which someone, somewhere, wanted to remain hidden. So to know the truth, we had to know the news.

From this need to know, it was only a short distance to

where we are today. The right to know. Seen from the classical perspective, this is nothing more than the right to be told the truth. Full information. Uncovered. Unhidden. In effect, we have given birth to a new form of democracy — a democracy of information. Its parents, truth and curiosity. Its midwife, the media. So now nothing is hidden. Now we know everything.

We know how much the queen earns. We know the pension of the chairman of ICL. We know the marital condition of our political leaders.

And the sexual condition of our movie stars.

We know which schools produce the best A levels.

Which hospital has the best record in hips replacement.

How much tar and nicotine there is in a cigarette.

And the precise ingredients of a packet of cornflakes.

Today, for good or ill, society's cosy status quo is being challenged dramatically; not by Rupert Murdoch or CDROMs or the Internet — but by something far more threatening. An audience with a democratic right to full information.

Nothing left to hide

But is this a birth to celebrate or regret? Is it a good thing to live in a democracy of information? Frankly, it is not as clear as some people think. In particular, there are two dangers in the democracy of information that I would like to warn against: a threat posed by it and a threat posed to it.

We should recognise that this flood of uncontrolled information has wider effects. It can shatter comforting illusions. It is disconcerting to discover that our monarchs are interested in their sexuality. And that our bosses are interested in their pay. Our streets are filled with rivers of blood from this daily slaughter of sacred cows. But the astonishment created by this stream of shocking revelations quickly turns to world-weary resignation. Who can deny that this affects the way people see life in general?

We hear a lot about the decline of deference, the death of institutions, the rise of apathy, the triumph of cynicism. But is it surprising that people lose respect for great institutions and public figures when they are constantly being exposed as corrupt, incompetent, or just

simply human?

Since the World War II, almost every British prime minister and American president has achieved a lower "low" rating from the public than any predecessor. It's a straight line down. This new democracy of information is the main cause of this disaffection and of the record low levels of esteem in which our familiar institutions are held. They have not got worse; we simply know more about them now. This is largely a good thing. But not always. In politics, democracy is corrupted when it turns into the tyranny of the majority — the "elected dictatorship" of Lord Hailsham's celebrated warning. Equally, the democracy of information is corrupted by the tyranny of revelation. Ultimately, the only people who can stop this are our editors and our regulators. They should use their power wisely. A lot depends on it.

You would think that the better informed the audience, the less the need for government regulation. But, on the contrary, it appears that some people in authority do not trust us with all this information. For example, proposals now circulating in the European Commission represent a

huge extension to government regulation of what we are allowed to see and hear. Astonishingly, it is proposed that a whole range of products which can be freely sold cannot be freely described to the public.

Instead of providing more information to people, the commission wants to cover up what is currently available. So there are threats to the advertising of toys, sweets, snacks, soft drinks, tobacco, slimming foods, alcohol, betting, pharmaceuticals — because someone somewhere, who no doubt consumes all these things like most normal people, has decided that the public cannot be trusted to receive advertising messages about them.

Directives on broadcasting. Restrictions on advertising. Bans on sexual stereotyping. Where will it end? Presumably, objections will be raised in due course to the advertising of washing powder, on the grounds that people should not be duped into the dangerous belief that they can dirty their clothes and get away with it.

It is ironic that just as we begin to enjoy the benefits of the democracy of information, some people are preparing to impose this

dictatorship of suppression. In its threat to our fundamental right of free speech it resembles the arguments of those who launched the fatwah against Salman Rushdie.

This is an "adwah" against our right to free expression through advertising. I hope everyone who believes in free expression will resist these proposals — as the Canadian supreme court recently did by ruling that bans on tobacco advertising are infringements of free speech.

So while the democracy of information is enormously welcome, we should constantly be vigilant against the threat posed by it — the tyranny of revelation; and the threat to it — the dictatorship of suppression. The temptation in such situations is to try to find a balance. A balance between truth and curiosity. But the problem in seeking balance is that you can end up falling between two stools.

Of course, the negative consequences of all the information that we have may tempt us to protect, to control. To hide and cover up. To try to go back to where we were before. But consider this: the alternatives to this new democracy of information are worse. The truth hurts. But ignorance kills.

The Guardian

This woman's child was taken from her womb so that an American couple could have him. Jan Rocha of The Guardian reports

Babies for sale

LUZ MIRANDA, 17 years old and nearly eight months pregnant, thought she was going for a pre-natal examination arranged by the woman she worked for as a maid, but then the nurses tied her down. When she struggled, they hit her.

"I cried for help and told them to stop but they just carried on. I told them I didn't want them to take my baby, then I felt the excruciating pain of the knife going in."

With only a local anaesthetic, in non-sterile surroundings, she had a caesarean section. Once the baby had been removed, Luz was abandoned in the back room of a clandestine nursery, in Asuncion, Paraguay. She was found because of a providential raid by judge Patricia Balsco, who has been investigating the illegal baby trade. But her wounds had become infected. Doctors had to give her massive blood transfusions to save her and she is scarred for life.

In August, thanks to BBC2's Assignment programme, which went to Paraguay to investigate the baby trade, she was finally reunited with her daughter, prematurely torn from her because an adoption lawyer urgently needed a baby for prospective parents arriving from abroad.

Dionisia Gonzalez is a married woman with five children. Her husband's wages as a building labourer are very low: the family lives in a one-room shack on the outskirts of Asuncion. One day a woman appeared at her door saying she was the boss's wife and that Dionisia's husband had suffered a terrible accident and been taken to hospital. She said she would take Dionisia there, and told her to bring her 10-month-old baby.

At the hospital she offered to hold him while Dionisia, distraught, rushed in to look for her injured husband. He was not there and when she came out the woman and Rodrigo had disappeared. Dionisia hunted for him, walking the streets because she had no money for transport, appealing on a radio programme where she read out a letter to him: "Are you all right, Rodrigo, are you thirsty, hungry, are you cry-

ing, are you upset because we aren't with you?"

Her agony lasted two months until the same judge, who later found Luz, organised a raid on a clandestine guardaria (nursery) and found 29 babies and small children packed into cots in small dark rooms, waiting to be adopted. As soon as new parents were found they would be transferred — by then better-fed and dressed in new clothes — to a shiny new nursery.

Rodrigo was so thin and pale that Dionisia was only sure it was her son when she recognised his birthmarks; he was also covered in severe nappy rash. Another baby was so sick that he died in hospital. Rodrigo went back to the one-room shack. Now he is three years old, but still scared of strangers. Dionisia cries when she remembers those days.

Every year hundreds of childless couples arrive in Paraguay to adopt a baby, 90 per cent from the U.S., the rest from the U.K., Europe and Israel. They come in ignorance of the misery behind Paraguay's booming adoption trade. They believe they are involved in a legal process. They have paid up to \$15,000 to an adoption agency, had a home study done, been interviewed by social workers. Many have made financial sacrifices to pay the costs. One couple mortgaged their home and sold their car.

While they wait in Asuncion for the paperwork to go through, which can take months, couples can have their baby staying with them, often in the city's most comfortable hotels. At the Gran Hotel del Paraguay, once the favourite haunt of travellers and writers, waiters manoeuvre round high chairs as they serve dinner, while the squawk of parrots in the gardens is almost drowned by baby cries.

Paraguay has no official adoption agency. Instead, a couple may be in the hands of a lawyer who arranges court hearings, translators, baby-sitters, hotels — and the baby. In some of the guardarias each cot has the lawyer's name on it.

The demand caused by falling fertility in industrialised countries has trans-

formed what was once a humanitarian act — finding new parents for an unwanted or orphaned child — into a trade dominated by a small group of unscrupulous lawyers.

Paraguay, a Catholic country with strong family values, has very few orphaned or unwanted children, but it does have thousands of poor, often illiterate, women, whose babies can be bought, taken by deceit or even stolen.

Only 30 per cent of babies from such countries are given up voluntarily, believes Dr. Ruben Riquelme, head of the Judicial Investigation Centre attached to the imposing law courts, but actually situated in a few rooms in a hospital morgue. (It is also a career dead-end).

At Interpol's request, the centre is now investigating a baby-smuggling ring, discovered when Belgian police intercepted a Paraguayan couple at Brussels airport. They were about to hand over a newborn baby to an Israeli couple, and they confessed to taking another five babies into Europe in the previous six months.

The centre raided the Asuncion home of one of the ring-leaders and found more than 100 photos of babies and children and a pile of blank birth certificates, evidence which has mysteriously disappeared inside the labyrinth of the palace of justice.

Fraudulent birth certificates and false "mothers" who swear they are voluntarily giving up their babies are used by the traders. In 1990, an English family came to Paraguay and adopted a two-year-old girl. Before they left she became ill, so the lawyer found another child to take her place, using the identity papers of the first child. After a year in England the adoptive parents rejected her, and she was taken into care by the local authority. Now she has been adopted by another English family.

American couples complete the adoption process in Paraguay, and the child leaves as a U.S. citizen. U.K. couples have to complete the adoption process in England, taking the baby out of Paraguay with the mother's permission and a travel permit from the National Department for the Protection of Children, many of which have been falsified. British couples in Paraguay and in the U.K. refused to be

filmed. Some threatened injunctions to stop the programme being shown.

Several of the most notorious adoption lawyers have been charged with baby-stealing and child-trafficking. One spent five months on remand in prison in 1993, but none of the cases has come to trial because of missing evidence and reluctant witnesses. The adoption lawyers started a vicious campaign to discredit the judge who tried to stop the trade by raiding clandestine nurseries; she had to abandon the raids.

Victor Llano and Sonia Tellechea, the two judges who between them authorise most of the international adoptions, (as many as 16 in one day), were accused by the American Association of Jurists of being "complacent" with the fraudulent and illegal aspects of many adoptions and of ignoring the constitutional rights of children. Judge Llano's answer to all criticisms is that adoption is better than abortion.

The lawyers who specialise in adoption have found themselves an easy way to make money, taking advantage of foreigners' desperation for a baby and of poor women's vulnerability in a country where social inequality is huge (and where nearly 40 years of violent repression under dictator General Alfredo Stroessner has left a legacy of submission). The lawyers' defence is that they are finding good homes for the babies bred by ignorant girls.

The growing demand has boosted international adoptions in Paraguay from a few 10 years ago, when each cost only \$200-\$300, to more than 600 cases a year now. Besides the formal adoptions, an unknown number of babies are smuggled abroad. Childless Paraguayan couples say they cannot compete with the prices paid by overseas couples.

Last month, the Paraguayan Congress, under pressure from human rights campaigners, voted to suspend international adoptions for one year while safeguards are introduced. The lawyers lobbied hard against suspension, but they were also prepared for it. In the days before it became law they filed scores of new adoption applications, enough to keep them busy for months. Now it is just a question of finding the babies.



Luz Miranda shows the caesarean scar. She thought she was in for a routine check

Israel agrees to early pullout

(Continued from page 1)

oners.

Mr. Arafat said there had been a "promise" from Mr. Peres and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to solve the prisoner issue "as quickly as possible."

Israel began a symbolic withdrawal on the West Bank last week when it handed over four villages to Palestinian control after 28 years of occupation.

It also freed 900 of the 4,000 prisoners in its jails. President Ezer Weizman, however, has blocked the release of five women prisoners who have "blood on their hands" while another 20 have remained in prison in a show of solidarity.

Mr. Peres, however, called on the 20 women to use their right to go free, saying their protest served no purpose. "Why should they wait," he added.

The Israeli foreign minister, asked if he objected to Mr. Arafat's attempts to persuade the militant group Hamas to take part in the elections in return for a reconciliation of violence, said it was not Israel's problem but an issue for the PLO.

Earlier Sunday, members of the Palestinian National

Authority's (PNA) preventive security service reopened five offices in villages near Jenin, defying Israeli orders they remain shut, Palestinians said.

"The office is open. We'll go on opening these offices in preparation to receive our national authority and we will not respond to the Israeli military," Mohammad Kabaha, an official at the office in Yabad village, told Reuters. Kadoura Mousa, Mr. Arafat's representative in the north of the West Bank, said: "These offices will remain open."

The Israeli army closed the offices on Saturday, saying they were opened illegally in areas under Israeli control.

Israel confined Palestinian security chief Jibril Rajoub to self-ruled Jericho on Saturday for opening the five offices, Israeli security sources said.

Three members of Colonel Rajoub's force detained by Israel at the offices on Saturday were freed on Sunday, Palestinians said.

On Friday, Palestinians said the Israeli army closed down PNA offices and halted renovation work at an Arab-owned building located near Jewish settler enclaves in Hebron.

Bomb kills 6 Israelis

(Continued from page 1)

bombing campaign against South Lebanon similar to the 1992 campaign that led to a truce in the fighting.

If the Lebanese people in South Lebanon must leave their homes because of Israeli military pressure, this will affect the Hizbollah. Israel, for reasons beyond me, is not doing it," said Mr. Levran, a reserve brigadier.

He said Israel should also

condition peace talks with Syria on an end to the attacks.

Moshe Maoz, director of the Truman Centre for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University, agreed Syria is using the Hizbollah as "part of the negotiations."

But he said that in the event of a peace deal, Hizbollah would likely defy any Syrian effort to disarm it and would likely then confront Syria as an occupier as well.

Saddam wins 100% vote

(Continued from page 1)

but a media show.

Everywhere with banners pledging allegiance to President Saddam.

The most popular is "Yes, yes to Saddam Hussein." For days the state-run television and radio stations ran nothing but songs in support of President Saddam.

Many seemed to believe that it is just another ploy by the regime to show the world that the current political situation has not changed especially since the defection of President Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel to Jordan in August. It also aimed at sending a message to the opposition within and outside Iraq that the regime is as strong as ever.

President Saddam spent the day relaxing in the com-

pany of Russian ultranationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and discussing the state of the world.

"He was in a good mood, much more relaxed than I have seen him before, and less confrontational and aggressive," Mr. Zhirinovskiy told reporters early Sunday. "We ate fish, a beautiful fish, a presidential fish. We drank beer... and we talked for five hours. I for four hours and he for one," said the Russian politician.

President Saddam talked about the referendum, democracy and his troubled relationship with the United States.

"Saddam said he would like to develop democracy because Iraq can't be an island in the middle of a large world."

Bosnia fighting slows down

(Continued from page 1)

mine that served as a Serb detention centre in 1992, but most are in the open.

Aid agencies have very few supplies in the nearby Serb stronghold of Banja Luka, where refugees have flooded in since early August, when neighbouring Croatia retook most of its Serb-held land and sent more than 100,000 Serbs fleeing into Bosnia.

The Red Cross has handled an additional 130,000 refugees in northern Bosnia since mid-September, when government and Croat forces started taking large chunks of Serb-held land in Bosnia, Mr. Sparrow said.

The disarray has helped trigger rifts among Serb leaders over the U.S.-led peace process. The current truce is supposed to last 60 days, ushering in peace talks in the United States on Oct. 31

which Washington hopes will lead to an international peace conference and the dispatch of up to 25,000 American troops as part of a much larger NATO-led force policing peace.

Bosnian-Serb leader Radovan Karadzic insisted Sunday that Serbs would not recognize any change in front lines since Sept. 8. It was agreed in Geneva on that date that Bosnia would formally remain one state, divided into a Muslim-Croat entity on 51 per cent of the territory, and a Serb republic on the remaining 49 per cent.

Mr. Karadzic spoke at a meeting of the self-styled Bosnian Serb assembly. Attempting to defuse popular anger at Serb losses, he promised to call to account commanders who had abandoned their positions.

The exact position on the ground was unclear, given

government refusal to allow U.N. monitors into territory taken by Muslim-led and Croat forces last week.

But all three warring parties agreed late Saturday to submit maps giving their positions, and promised to allow the United Nations free access soon, Sochnacki said.

As territory changes hands in the north, additional reports of atrocities are coming to light.

Aid workers have reported up to 6,000 expulsions of Muslims and Croats from Serb-held territory in the past week. There have been reports of draft-age men separated from their families, summary executions, robbery and rape.

Bosnia's war erupted in April 1992, when armed Serbs rebelled against Muslims and Croats after a vote to secede from Serb-led Yugoslavia. Some 200,000 people are believed dead or missing.

Octoberfest is the occasion you have all been waiting for. Once you join us you will be transferred from the day-to-day routine into the Bavarian atmosphere in Germany. Where there will be an endless flow of beer and lots of fun.

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League chief: Israel cannot control Arab economy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Israel will never be able to control Arab economies, Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid said Saturday seeking to assuage fears of economic integration with the Jewish state.

He told the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) television that Israel was far superior in technology and its per capita income as among the highest in the region.

But "no matter how advanced it is, I cannot imagine Israel will be able to control the economy of Arab states," Dr. Abdul Meguid told MBC, monitored here.

"Israel is only four to five million people while Arabs are more than 200 million and we have massive re-

sources and a large number of intellectuals," he said.

Several Arab officials have warned against economic links with Israel following a breakthrough in the Middle East peace process. They argue Israel only wanted to control their economies and find a market for its products.

Hundreds of officials and experts from Israel and Arab states are due to gather in Amman late this month along with delegates from other countries for their second Middle East economic conference after a meeting in Casablanca last year.

The talks would cover economic relations and joint projects, including the proposed Middle East Development Bank and the Tourism Council.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, an

Egyptian, said he would attend the Amman conference but stressed Israeli-Arab economic cooperation would not be possible without peace.

"Politics and economy are faces of one coin. Economic cooperation will not succeed while there are outstanding political problems," he said.

But the head of the 22-member League said he believed Arabs and Israel would eventually reach a comprehensive peace settlement.

"There is no going back and peace has become inevitable. There are some rational people in Israel who really want peace. They realise Israel, despite its military power, cannot guarantee security without peace," he said.

Arab Gulf states in major projects to tap gas wealth

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are pumping billions of dollars in fresh projects to tap their enormous gas wealth to benefit from growing demand in Asia and new markets.

The projects in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) run parallel with expansions in the upstream oil industry to increase production capacity and maintain sustainable capacities.

Gas exploitation projects involve investments of more than \$25 billion as they cover Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and petrochemicals.

"Such projects will turn the GCC countries into major exporters of LNG and petrochemicals and offset weak oil prices," a Gulf oil executive said.

expansion projects to double the output capacity of its QAPCO complex in 500,000 tonnes of ethylene and 280,000 tonnes of polyethylene.

Another company, Qatar Fertilizers, is increasing production by around 1,500 tonnes of ammonia per day and 2,000 tonnes of urea at a cost of \$500 million.

Qatar also plans to set up another project to produce more than 600,000 tonnes of methanol per year at a cost of \$450 million.

Bahrain, a small oil producer, is considering building a urea plant with an output capacity of around 560,000 tonnes per year. It will complement the existing ammonia plant, which produces around 425,000 tonnes per year.

The UAE is already a major producer of fertilizers, most of which are exported in China. Production exceeds 600,000 tonnes of ammonia and urea.

Oman has also announced plans to set up a petrochemical complex at a cost of \$600-\$700 million to produce polyethylene. The sulfonate is likewise considering establishing fertilizer industries.

In LNG, Qatar is about to launch one of the biggest projects in the world to tap its giant North Field.

Industry sources said the project, involving several foreign partners, would produce nearly 20 million tonnes of LNG per year and its cost was expected to exceed \$12 billion.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil power, has embarked on projects to set up new petrochemical plants and expand existing complexes.

The kingdom already accounts for nearly 75 per cent of the total GCC production of petrochemicals and fertilizers and the new projects would sharply boost that share.

They cover the production of ethylene, propylene, and MTBE, a complex substance used in the production of unleaded petrol.

Qatar, the first GCC country to establish petrochemical industries, is also engaged in

Kuwait is setting up one of the biggest petrochemical plants in the region, with a production capacity of around 650,000 tonnes of ethylene and 450,000 tonnes of polyethylene per year.

The project, undertaken by the U.S. company Union Carbide, also includes a 360,000-tonne-capacity glycol ethylene plant.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) does not have a petrochemical industry but is planning to build a complex to produce nearly 300,000 tonnes of ethylene per year. The project is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion.

GCC official urges EU to drop planned carbon tax

MUSCAT (R) — A proposed European Union (EU) energy tax would hit Arab Gulf economies and damage ties between the two trade groups, a senior Arab Gulf official said Sunday.

"This will effect negatively trade relations between the two groups because it touches upon the most important economic source of the GCC countries," he said.

The EU has been working to agree on a common policy that would impose a \$10 a barrel tax on energy supplies over 10 years, ostensibly to limit the damage to the environment by burning hydrocarbons that has been linked to ozone depletion.

"If the EU goes ahead with this proposal on carbon tax, that will widen the gap in the trade imbalance," Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Sheikh Fahim Al Qassimi said in a statement reported by the Oman News Agency.

Customs Department plans easier, fairer procedures

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter



Nazmi Al Abdullah

AMMAN — The Customs Department intends to implement several new measures to ease procedures and ensure fairness and justice while assessing customs duties on imports by setting up baseline data and increased use of computer, the director of the department, Nazmi Abdullah, said Sunday.

The new measures, expected to be in place by July 1, 1996, envisage the creation of a list of international prices for most products on the basis of which customs duties will be levied, Mr. Abdullah told the Jordan Times.

This means that in most cases the value of an imported product, for customs purposes, will be assessed at the international market prices rather than the invoices and relevant documents produced by the importer, Mr. Abdullah explained.

The customs authorities detect hundreds of cases every year where the importer has purposely undervalued the cost of goods so as to bring down the customs duties, but more often than not the detections are based on logic rather than any set parameters.

On the other hand, importers who reflect the actual prices in their invoices also complain of overzealous efforts on the part of customs

import/export will be applicable to the Jordanian system.

Another measure that Jordan plans is a "self-declaration" system and computerisation. This means, according to Mr. Abdullah, that an importer could actually assess the actual customs duties due on imports with the help of computer, which will also verify the data provided by the importers to establish accuracy.

Yet another move planned by the Customs Department is a revision of the employee incentive bonus system.

"Employee incentive" is an item in the actual customs declaration that accompanies any import into the country subject to customs duties. As the title suggests, the collected revenues are used to benefit employees of the department.

Furthermore, Customs Department employees are also entitled to a share of penalties and extra charges levied from an importer found to have undervalued the imports in the invoice.

Sixty per cent of the penalties and extra charges will be sent to the state Treasury and the rest will be deposited in a central fund that would benefit all employees.

This, Mr. Abdullah explained, helps ensure that customs inspectors do not score individual gains from overzealous efforts to assess the import value of goods at a higher than actual price.

U.S. government nearing debt ceiling

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government will reach the limit of its borrowing authority of \$4.9 trillion at the end of this month, the Clinton administration has said.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, attending a conference of business leaders in Williamsburg, Virginia, said the government "will hit the debt ceiling Oct. 31."

A Treasury official who spoke on condition of anonymity said Mr. Rubin has not pinpointed the date before, saying instead that borrowing authority would be exhausted at the end of October. Others

have said that the first real risk of a government default could occur Nov. 15 when the Treasury is due to make a \$25 billion interest payment on the debt.

Republicans in Congress have vowed not to raise the debt ceiling until President Clinton agrees to their plans to trim federal spending and eliminate the deficit in seven

years. Mr. Clinton has said he will not be "blackmailed" into agreeing to the GOP programme.

Mr. Rubin has said it is irresponsible for Republicans to hold the debt ceiling hostage in the budget debate because even the risk of a government default on its debt could cause turmoil in financial markets.

Bahrain promotes hiring nationals

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain has decided to raise foreign labour fees in a bid to decrease local unemployment, Labour Minister Abdul Nabi Abdallah Al Shola has said.

The fee to renew a foreign work permit is 150 dinars (\$450) compared to 40 dinars (\$108) previously, he told a local newspaper, Al Ayam.

The tax on recruiting an expatriate worker will double to 100 dinars (270) in 1996, he said, adding, however, that this hike excludes the hiring of a housemaid.

Mr. Shola said the move aims at "containing the flow of foreign labour and giving job opportunities to the local work force."

The minister last month said Bahrain's unemployment rate went down to 4.6 per cent in August, from 13.8 per cent at the end of 1993.

Bahrain's population was set at 540,000 in 1993, including 200,000 foreigners.

Bahraini opposition groups in exile say unemployment is one of the main reasons for the riots that broke out in December 1994, which left at least 12 people dead. The demonstrations cooled down in April.

Bahrain, a small oil producer with 45,000 barrel-per-day output, saw its deficit double in 1994, to \$340 million, from \$172 million in 1993, as oil revenues decreased by 17.9 per cent, to \$758 million.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1995
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day to know just what it is you want out of life and then to bend your efforts in such direction vigorously.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Contact those today who are most experienced in fields of interest to you gain their expertise and support for a new project.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day and evening to make as many worthwhile friends as you can. Drive wisely on the highway and be courteous to others.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Place your energies on outside affairs directed towards your success and you can make great progress today. The evening is best spent at home with loved ones.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You get many excellent ideas from various sources, so pick out the best and put them in operation early. Avoid one who is jealous of you.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan how to get ahead in practical matters today and gain the advice of one who is expert in business and provide you with the answers to pressing questions.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Have a discussion with clever partners and know what is best to do to be more successful in your endeavours. Dress carefully today with the attitude towards advancement.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more enthused about your career activities and you can become more proficient at it. Get adverse conditions solved with the aid of fellow associates.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day to set up appointments for amusements with friends. Come to an understanding with the one you love.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Give as much thought as you can today to family and home affairs and how best to improve them in such a direction to give you peace of mind.

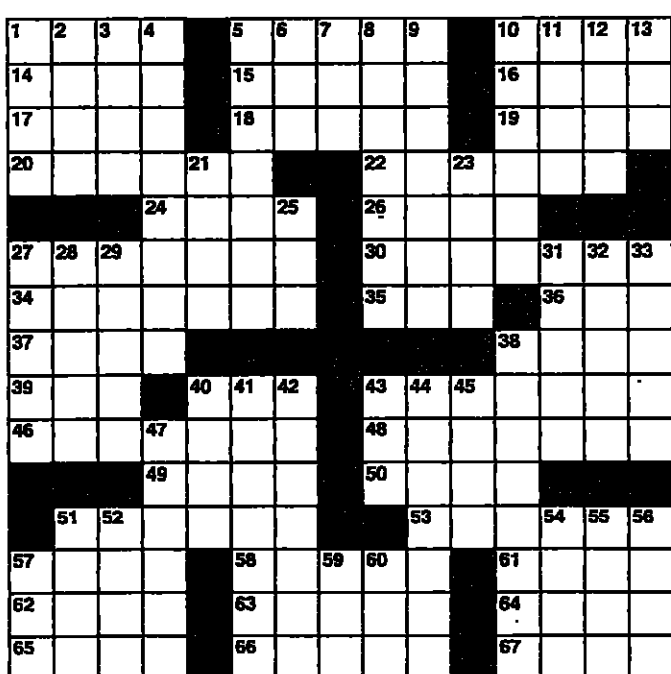
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a fine day for making as many contacts as possible and accomplish a good deal of activities in the outside world.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get into practical affairs today and add much to your present abundance. The evening should be spent quietly at home.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

THE Daily Crossword by James and Phyllis Barrick

- ACROSS**
- Energy type: abbr.
 - Embrace
 - Warrior of Greek myth
 - City in Ohio
 - Author Bret
 - Hindu deified hero
 - Entrance to a mine
 - Great quantity
 - Pesky bug
 - Pestle's mate
 - Puts out
 - Pangolin meal
 - green
 - Name anew
 - Famous peak
 - Artist's studio
 - Morning moisture
 - Female kangaroo
 - Bakery items
 - Melody
 - Dog tags, for short
 - Vigoda
 - "The — Brief"
 - Kind of fishing
 - Worshipful ones
 - Tattered duds
 - Fully open
 - Kettle
 - Bell tower
 - Place in Asia
 - Where Katmandu is
 - Indian
 - Chagall
 - In a rage
 - Vend
 - Emile or Gomer
 - Poker stakes
 - Ooze



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Yesterday's puzzle solved:



- DOWN**
- Ancient land
 - Italian resort
 - Prince of the East
 - Marsh plants
 - Joyful chuckle
 - Varnish ingredient
 - 100 square meters
 - Dirty, in a way
 - Thoughtful
 - Disputant
 - "Eyre"
 - Amo, —, amat
 - Indian totem pole
 - Opposer
 - Did in
 - Sunday talk: abbr.
 - Overzealous
 - Composition for piano
 - Word in grammar
 - Bring out
 - Submarine device
 - High school students
 - Unflagging
 - On the double: abbr.
 - A flower
 - Oriental
 - Handle rudely
 - Comestible items
 - Ore deposit
 - Strut
 - Waiter's item
 - Nobleman
 - Unfettered
 - Rouse to anger
 - Animal cry
 - Mischievous child
 - Butter unit
 - Devoured

Peanuts



Andy Cap



Mutt'n'Jeff



Bahrain promotes hiring nationals

MANAMA (AP) — Bahrain has decided to increase local employment, Labour Minister Abdul Nabi Abdulhadi Shola has said.

The fee to renew a foreign work permit is 150 dinars (\$450) compared to 40 dinars (\$120) previously, he said. The tax on recruiting an expatriate worker will double to 100 dinars (\$300) in 1996, he said, adding, however, that this hike excludes hiring of a housemaid.

Mr. Shola said the move aims at "containing the flow of foreign labour and giving job opportunities to the local work force."

The minister last month said Bahrain's unemployment rate went down to 17.5 per cent in August, from 18.5 per cent at the end of 1994. Bahrain's population was 200,000 in 1993, including 200,000 foreigners.

Bahrain opposition groups have said unemployment is one of the main reasons for the riots that broke out in December 1994, which left 12 people dead. Demonstrations cooled down in April.

Bahrain, a small oil producer with 45,000 barrels a day output, saw its deficit double in 1994, to \$340 million, from \$172 million in 1993, as oil revenues decreased by 17.9 per cent to \$58 million.

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Thursdays of October, Opal Tourmaline

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Moody's debt rating may invite more foreign investments to Jordan

JORDAN HAS requested Moody's, the renowned U.S. credit rating agency, to give a rating to the Kingdom's debts as a step towards attracting foreign investment to the country, the governor of the Central Bank revealed.

It is expected that the rating will be issued before the opening of the Amman Economic Summit on Oct. 29. The governor also revealed that negotiations were underway with France and Germany to reduce Jordan's debts of about \$1 billion to the two countries.

The chief of the Central Bank, Mohammad Nabulsi, cautioned against expecting immediate returns from the peace process and stressed that the road was long and requiring strenuous work. He said he was not worried about closer economic ties with Israel because the aim was not to achieve an economic merger.

Dr. Nabulsi was not worried either if commercial ties with Iraq were broken because "Jordan had diversified its export markets for some time." On the financial side, Dr. Nabulsi said Jordan was seeking to increase foreign exchange reserves from \$450 million to \$600 million by the end of the year. He indicated that reserves have not reached that level but noted that Japan and the World Bank have agreed to provide loans to cover the gap between what's available and the required target (Al Aswaq).

SOURCES AT the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities have said that 23 development areas had been specified on the 60-kilometre shore of the Dead Sea but their development would be done in two stages. The first, until the year 2000, include providing 3,200 beds for developing the Sweimeh area. Of the total number of beds, 800 would be in hotels, 1,200 in housing units and another 1,200 in apartments. According to the sources, the first stage will also include therapeutic facilities as the area is characterised by natural therapeutic resources. In this context, studies have set the level of water at the Dead Sea at 395 metres "below sea level." The plans which have been adopted include basic designs for ten development regions half of them in Sweimeh and the other half in Zara (Al Dustour).

A DRAFT document of the proposed Middle East Development Bank sets the bank's capital at \$5 billion divided into paid up shares and demand shares the value of which is to be determined at a later date. It will be obligatory on the funding members of the bank to pay the first instalment within three months from the date of putting the bank's funding agreement into effect. The remaining amount should be paid after one year from the date of setting the first instalment. The plan is to spread the payment of capital into five instalments at a rate of 20 per cent of the total subscription of each country.

As to the administrative structure, the draft document sees an organisational chart of a president, an advisory council representing the participating country and a governing council where all the powers are concentrated. Only those countries committed to peace in the region and supporting bilateral and multilateral negotiations would be allowed membership. The draft document needs. The bank's loans and credits to be extended should not exceed the capital of the bank which will not engage in export credit guaranteed schemes (Al Aswaq).

Jordan sees major foreign capital from Amman summit

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan said Sunday it expects this month's Middle East and North Africa summit, aided by liberalised investment laws, to spawn multi-million dollar joint ventures.

"I think we will have the ability with the new investment laws and better investment climate to attract foreign investment and compete with all the neighbouring states, having put ourselves ahead of them in many areas," said Ali Abul Ragheb, minister of industry and trade.

Mr. Abul Ragheb, said in an interview that even before the summit Jordan was attracting private foreign commitments in some of the 27 major projects — to cost over \$3.5 billion — and 136 private sector projects to be submitted to the summit.

More than 1,000 government leaders and businessmen will attend the summit, a follow up to last year's Casablanca summit that for the first time brought together Arab and Israeli political and business leaders.

The minister said other countries wanted investment but Jordan would offer a better climate as a regional hub with attractive returns.

He said Jordan believed the Middle East peace process was "shifting global foreign interest to the region with a more secure political future that offered lucrative investment opportunities for the first time."

More than half the proposed \$3.5 billion in projects were in tourism and industrial plans, with the private sector investing for the first time.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said projects would be offered at the summit on a BOT (build, operate, transfer) and BOO (build, operate and own) basis, including a \$405 million project to exploit water from the Disi aquifer on the border with Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Abul Ragheb, who heads the national committee preparing for the summit, said there was "huge demand for foreign tourism investments on the Aqaba coast and the Dead Sea."

He also said major ventures in the pipeline include a Jordanian-Israeli project to exploit Dead Sea minerals with the Arab Potash Company, announced as a fait accompli by Israel last week. Jordan wants \$142 million in foreign capital for a complex for bromine.

He also said Jordan was working on a venture with Norway's Norsk Hydro firm to set up a fertilizer plant with Jordan Phosphates Mines Company.

Jordan plans to transform the Red Sea coast south of Aqaba into a major resort with tourist villages, golf and Disney-style amusement centres.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said along with a \$120 million U.S. private tourism investment in the Aqaba coast, Jordan was about to lease four tracts on the Dead Sea for construction of four major hotel complexes.

The project is the first to allow foreign investment in land on the Dead Sea, a close military area until Jordan's peace treaty with Israel last October ended 46 years of war.

When CTC consumer products — a joint venture between the Walt Disney Co and Saudi Arabia's Jawa family — was set up.

Although copyright laws had recently been introduced, pirated products still plagued Disney in the Middle East.

"Copyright (violation) is still a problem. It is diminishing, but it is still around," CTC President Ahmad Jawa said.

Sporting a flowing white robe, the traditional Arab Gulf dress, with Mickey Mouse embroidered on the breast pocket, Mr. Jawa said within the region the United Arab Emirates (UAEs) enforcement of copyright laws was the best.

A number of successful raids on stores carrying fake merchandise in the UAE had been carried out.

"In Saudi Arabia we are starting to get enforcement, but we are always looking for more. In Kuwait it started in August, and Qatar and Bahrain should come on line soon, but there's no positive movement in Oman yet," Mr. Jawa added.

In Egypt, almost all Disney apparel was fake and within the region, Syria was a source of pirated goods, he added.

Mr. Jawa said most Disney consumer products sold in the Middle East were imported from Europe, the Far East and the U.S.

But CTC was trying to foster local manufacturing. "It would give the local cultural touch," Mr. Sissmann said, adding that translating books, films, videos and magazines into Arabic was an important part of Disney's drive for market share in the region.

Sales of the Arabic video of the blockbuster hit "The Lion King," which was recently launched in the Middle East, were expected to be very good, Mr. Jawa said.

He would not give a sales forecast.

Over 30 million copies of "The Lion King" video have been sold so far in the United States, making it the most popular video ever.

GAZA (R) — Samco, a Palestinian computer company based in the West Bank, and TMA, a U.S. company for technological administration, signed an agreement in Gaza Sunday to manufacture and export electronic instruments, officials said.

This was the first concrete deal to result from an investment mission to Gaza in July by the Overseas Private Investment Corp (OPIC), U.S. Consul General Edward Abington said during the signing ceremony.

OPIC aims to set up investment projects between the Palestinian and U.S. private sectors.

He did not disclose the value of the deal but said the joint venture will be 75 per cent Palestinian capital and 25 per cent American.

He said the start of our high-tech industry. It's very important that we move from the old industry of clothing, shoes, and vegetables into the level of high technology," said Nabil Shaath, head of planning for the Palestinian Authority.

Samco is based in Nablus. The head of the Nablus Municipal Council, Ghassan Al Ahaka, said the deal was "the starting point of cooperation with the United States."

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Disney expects 10-fold rise in Gulf sales

DUBAI (R) — The Walt Disney Company expects sales of its products in the Gulf, where half the population is under 15, to grow tenfold to \$500 million within the next 10 years, but piracy remains a problem, officials say.

Disney consumer products Europe, Middle East and Africa President Pierre Sissmann told Reuters that annual Disney sales in the region were currently worth between \$40-\$50 million.

"If we apply the natural growth rate in mature markets (to the Gulf) 10 years from now we should be at half-a-billion dollars," he said.

The Gulf is a young market, with about half the population of around 23 million under the age of 15, Mr. Sissmann said. Children's influence on purchasing decisions was significant.

Inadequate or non-existent copyright laws a few years ago meant Disney products were not sold in the region before mid-1993,

when CTC consumer products — a joint venture between the Walt Disney Co and Saudi Arabia's Jawa family — was set up.

Although copyright laws had recently been introduced, pirated products still plagued Disney in the Middle East.

"Copyright (violation) is still a problem. It is diminishing, but it is still around," CTC President Ahmad Jawa said.

Sporting a flowing white robe, the traditional Arab Gulf dress, with Mickey Mouse embroidered on the breast pocket, Mr. Jawa said within the region the United Arab Emirates (UAEs) enforcement of copyright laws was the best.

A number of successful raids on stores carrying fake merchandise in the UAE had been carried out.

"In Saudi Arabia we are starting to get enforcement, but we are always looking for more. In Kuwait it started in August, and Qatar and Bahrain should come on line soon, but there's no positive movement in Oman yet," Mr. Jawa added.

In Egypt, almost all Disney apparel was fake and within the region, Syria was a source of pirated goods, he added.

Mr. Jawa said most Disney consumer products sold in the Middle East were imported from Europe, the Far East and the U.S.

But CTC was trying to foster local manufacturing. "It would give the local cultural touch," Mr. Sissmann said, adding that translating books, films, videos and magazines into Arabic was an important part of Disney's drive for market share in the region.

Sales of the Arabic video of the blockbuster hit "The Lion King," which was recently launched in the Middle East, were expected to be very good, Mr. Jawa said.

He would not give a sales forecast.

Over 30 million copies of "The Lion King" video have been sold so far in the United States, making it the most popular video ever.

GAZA (R) — Samco, a Palestinian computer company based in the West Bank, and TMA, a U.S. company for technological administration, signed an agreement in Gaza Sunday to manufacture and export electronic instruments, officials said.

This was the first concrete deal to result from an investment mission to Gaza in July by the Overseas Private Investment Corp (OPIC), U.S. Consul General Edward Abington said during the signing ceremony.

OPIC aims to set up investment projects between the Palestinian and U.S. private sectors.

He did not disclose the value of the deal but said the joint venture will be 75 per cent Palestinian capital and 25 per cent American.

He said the start of our high-tech industry. It's very important that we move from the old industry of clothing, shoes, and vegetables into the level of high technology," said Nabil Shaath, head of planning for the Palestinian Authority.

Samco is based in Nablus. The head of the Nablus Municipal Council, Ghassan Al Ahaka, said the deal was "the starting point of cooperation with the United States."

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U.S., Palestinian companies sign first hi-tech venture

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Financial Markets

Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (October 10-October 13, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit appreciated modestly against other major currencies last week. It ended the week 0.33 per cent higher against the mark, 0.57 per cent higher against sterling and 0.42 per cent higher against the yen.

While New York was closed on an official holiday Monday, the dollar declined against the mark Tuesday. Its depreciation came on the back of weak performance of the U.S. stock market. Reports indicated that the Dow Jones industrial average lost 66 points during trading hours, only to reverse and end the day down by a mere five points.

News that an earthquake hit the southern part of Mexico also weighed on the dollar, as dealers assessed its impact on the Mexican economy.

The dollar appreciated against other major currencies Wednesday, however, on news that political turmoil in France had eased. Reports indicating that the French prime minister would not be convicted for a dubious lease of a housing unit owned by the city of Paris drove the French franc higher against the Deutschmark. However, analysts suspected that such respite for the franc would prove temporary as France continues to suffer from an excessive budget deficit and costly entitlement programmes. They also stressed that the dollar might be negatively affected by the poor performance of the Mexican economy, especially if Mexico fails to service its debts, which are mostly owed to U.S. entities.

The dollar depreciated against other major currencies Thursday. Reports indicated that trading was slow and attributed the dollar's decline to technical factors. Meanwhile, the market ignored comments by the president of the Bundesbank that a strong dollar is beneficial to both the United States and the international economy.

The

Chang captures Seiko Super in straight sets



Mark Philippoussis of Australia returns a forehand against Michael Chang of the United States in the

singles final of the Seiko Super tennis tournament in Tokyo (Reuters photo)

TOKYO (R) — Top seed Michael Chang of the United States easily overcame the bullet serves of giant-killing Australian Mark Philippoussis on Sunday to capture the \$1.02 million Seiko Super Tennis Tournament.

Chang, ranked fifth in the world, displayed a remarkable range of shots and kept up steady pressure on Philippoussis to take his first Seiko title 6-3, 6-4 in one hour and 20 minutes.

Chang, the runner-up at last year's tournament, used a variety of return shots to blunt the powerful serve of the young Australian, who disposed of three seeded players in fighting his way through to the final.

"I think he was starting to get frustrated because I was able to get quite a few of his serves back," Chang said. "Over the last couple of weeks I don't think he was used to seeing many of his serves come back."

Philippoussis, nicknamed "scud" after the destructive Gulf war missile, came into Sunday's final with 55 service aces against Chang's 26. But he only managed seven aces

against Chang's eight in the match.

Philippoussis faced twelve service break points and at times appeared rattled by the range and placing of Chang's returns.

"He was really gearing to my serves and putting a lot of pressure on me," said Philippoussis.

The 18-year-old Melbourne native showed promise in breaking Chang's service in the third game of the first set, but was broken straight back.

Philippoussis, ranked 60 this week, used his powerful serve to survive three match points in game nine of the second set, notching back to back service aces and winning another point.

In the next game, Philippoussis briefly threatened to break Chang's service until the American smashed the winning shot.

The unseeded Philippoussis earned the right to play Chang with upsets of fifth seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden, 11th seed Brett Steven of New Zealand, and fourth seed Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands.



Michael Chang of the United States shows off the trophy after winning the singles final of the Seiko Super tennis tournament (Reuters photo)

World's best penholder says European grip better

NIMES, France (AFP) — South Korea's Kim Taek Soo, the world's best penholder, was in no doubt the European shakehand grip was now more effective in the world of table tennis.

Kim, who reached the quarter-finals of the men's singles world cup here, added: "If I could start my career again, I would use a shakehand grip."

The European grip, with fingers wrapped around the bat, evolved from the traditional Western tradition of shaking hands. Whereas the penholder style was more natural for Asians — they gripped the bat as though

they were using chopsticks or holding a pen.

Penholders won men's singles world titles from 1977 to 1987 — Japan's Mitsuru Kohno in 1977, Japan's Seiji Ono in 1979, China's Guo Yuehua in 1981 and 1983, and China's Jiang Jialiang in 1985 and 1987.

From 1989 to now, players with a Western grip have won the world title. The 1995 champion Kong Linghui turned a new page in Chinese table tennis history as he won with a European grip.

Three of the first five editions of the World Cup were won by penholders — Guo Yuehua in 1980 and 1982,

and Jiang Jialiang in 1984. But since then, only players with the European style have taken the World Cup title.

Kim a bronze medalist for South Korea in the 1995 world men's team event, said it was not just coincidence

penholders have dwindled since the late 80s.

Kim and China's world runner-up Liu Guoliang were the only penholders at the 16-strong, men's singles World Cup here this week.

"The penholder backhand

is much weaker than a Western grip backhand," said 25-year-old world number four Kim. "Before fast glue came on the scene, it was more difficult to exploit the weaker penholder backhand."

"But when fast glue came to be used by nearly all the top players, it became easier to exploit."

Kim believed it was a deliberate decision by Chinese coaches to train more Western grip players.

The Olympic bronze medalist in men's doubles, also admitted if he had his time over again, he would use a Western grip.

"I would start with a shakehand grip because it's easier. The backhand and the block is more difficult for a penholder. I don't have those problems because I worked very hard at those shots."

Jean-Philippe Gatin of France, the 1993 world champion, said Asian players, and China in particular, have always had players in their squad with European grips. Gatin said: "There are just more of them now — it's a natural progression as they realise the benefits to their backhand."

Commonwealth and North American champion Johnny Huang of Canada agreed with Kim the faster game has sounded a death knell for penholders.

"In the past, penholders who were fast around the court could play forehands all the time. You cannot do that these days and everybody needs a good backhand," Huang said.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

THE CENTRAL BANK OF JORDAN

In accordance with article (28-B) of the Central Bank of Jordan law No. (23) of 1971, the Central Bank of Jordan will put in circulation, as from Oct. 16, 1995, a new coin of the denomination (1 Dinar) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The new 1 Dinar coin is legal tender and will circulate alongside the bank notes and coins issued according to the Bylaw of Issuance of Jordanian Currency No. (28) year 1992.

Denomination: 1 Dinar
Alloy: 5.5% Nickel, 24.5% Zinc, 70% Copper
Diameter: 32 mm
Thickness: 2.1 mm
Weight: 12.4 gm
Shape: Heptagonal
Edge: Plain

The obverse of the new coin bears an effigy of His Majesty King Hussein encircled by the two phrases "Hussein Bin Talal", "The King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in Arabic.

The reverse incorporates:

- The logo of the FAO.
- The denomination (one Dinar) written in Arabic and English.
- The Hejira and Gregorian dates of issue.
- The phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in English.

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Wu loses chance to win 3rd marathon



Meng Xianhui

BEIJING (AFP) — China's Meng Xianhui stopped compatriot Hu Gangjun winning a third straight Beijing marathon on Sunday.

Meng, 21, won the men's race in 2hrs 16min and 20sec, and his coach said he could do even better.

Defending champion Hu clocked 2:16:29, nearly six minutes slower than his best time in 1994, the Xinhua News Agency said.

Hu has been plagued by a

foot injury all season.

Meng pulled away from Hu, Vladimir Kotov of Belarus and Nelson Ndepeva of Kenya in the last two kilometres. Kotov was third at 2:16:39 and Ndepeva fourth at 2:17:13.

Despite his victory Meng said he was not satisfied with the result. Meng's coach Zhang Fuxin said with reasonable practise, Meng could run a 2hr 10 min marathon in the next two or

three years — which would make him an Olympic and world title candidate.

Ren Xiujuan of China won the women's race in two hours 30 minutes, followed by another Chinese runner Zheng Guixia in 2:33:32 and Natalia Galushko of Belarus in 2:34:00.

China fielded a team of 10 male and 10 female runners in the field of 317 entrants from 17 countries.

Atletico stay on top

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Argentine Diego Pablo Simeone made a first-half goal Saturday to keep Atletico de Madrid unbeaten and on top of the standings with a 1-0 victory over Deportivo de la Coruna.

Simeone squeezed in his fourth goal of the season — all of them made on headers — in the last minute before the break at his home stadium.

The first-division's other unbeaten team also stayed that way, as Barcelona trampled Athletic de Bilbao 4-1. The victory kept Barcelona in second place with 20 points, two behind Atletico. No 3 Espanyol also won Saturday, sweeping over Sevilla 3-0 to stay one point behind Barcelona.

Barcelona owed half its goals to two of its young surprises, both up from the club's second-division team this season, who continued to outshine some of their elders.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANVAH HIRSH
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THE POWER OF TRUMPS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ A J 10
♥ K 6 4 3
♦ K 7 5 4
♣ Q

EAST
♠ 8 6 4 3 2
♥ 5
♦ J 3
♣ 7 5 4 3 2

WEST
♠ Q 5
♥ 9 8 7 2
♦ Q 9 8 3
♣ J 10 8

SOUTH
♠ K 7 6
♥ A Q J 10
♦ A 2 10 9
♣ A K 6

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1NT Pass 3♠ Pass
3NT Pass 6♠ Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♣

Never underestimate the power of a trump suit. Even when two balanced hands are facing each other, the contract will often play better in a suit fit than in no trump. Consider this deal from a team match.

Once South opened two no trump, wild horses would not have been able to stop North short of slam. At one table, simple addition and balanced distribution convinced North to raise directly to the no-

trump slam. At the other, the ruffing value in clubs prompted North to probe for a heart fit, which led to a final contract of six hearts. The nine of hearts was led at both tables.

Where the contract was played in no trump, declarer adopted a line that offered excellent chances for success. The opening lead was won with dummy's king and a diamond to the ten lost to the queen. After capturing West's heart return, declarer first tested for an even diamond split, without luck, then cashed the remaining heart winners followed by three rounds of clubs, discarding dummy's remaining diamond on the last.

With 10 tricks played, South learned that West had started with four cards in each red suit and at least three clubs, so the odds heavily favored East to hold the queen of spades. Going with the percentages, declarer crossed to the ace of spades and ran the jack. Down two.

Six hearts at the other table proved to be a breeze. After cashing a second heart to discover the break, declarer cashed three rounds of clubs, discarding a spade from dummy. The ace and king of spades were played and a spade ruff provided the 12th trick.

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PLAZA

Sandra Bullock
& Bill Pullman
in

While You
Were Sleeping

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL: 677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Adel Imam & Yusra
Birds of the Darkness
(Arabic)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:45
CONCORD "2"
Arnold Schwarzenegger...in
Conan The Barbarian
Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15

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Deaths number some 500 since 1884

LONDON (R) — Around the world some 500 boxers have died in the ring or as a result of being injured in a fight since the Marquis of Queensberry rules were introduced in 1884.

Recent deaths and serious injuries include:

September 1995 — Lee Dong-Choon of South Korea died of acute subdural haematoma following his dressing room collapse after he lost to Japan bantamweight champion Setsuo Kawamatsu in a 10-round bout in Tokyo on September 5. He did not recover consciousness after undergoing surgery.

May 1995 — Jimmy Garcia of Colombia, badly beaten in a losing challenge for the World Boxing Council (WBC) super featherweight title against Mexican Gabriel Ruelas in Las Vegas, passed out in his corner. He underwent surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain but lapsed into a coma and died two weeks later.

February 1995 — American Gerald McClellan needed brain surgery to remove a blood clot after being knocked out by Briton Nigel Benn in a WBC super-middleweight title fight in London.

After more than a month in hospital he was flown home, still requiring full-time nursing care, to continue his rehabilitation nearer family and friends.

July 1994 — Las Vegas-based former Olympic welterweight gold medalist Wangila Napunyi of Kenya collapsed shortly after being stopped in the ninth round by world-ranked American David Gonzalez and died after an operation to remove a blood clot from his brain.

It was the first death resulting from a boxing match in Nevada since 1982 when South Korean Kim Deuk-Koo died of head injuries

sustained in a bout against World Boxing Association (WBA) lightweight champion Ray Mancini of the United States.

The outcry over Kim's death resulted in world title bouts being reduced from 15 to 12 rounds.

April 1994 — Super-bantamweight Bradley Stone, 23, died two days after suffering brain damage following a punishing British title fight with Richie Wenton.

March 1994 — Heavyweight Michael Bentt of the United States was rushed to hospital following his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) heavyweight title defeat by Herbie Hide in London. Doctors found he had cumulative damage to his brain from years of punches and told him to retire from boxing.

January 1993 — Yasuji Hamakawa of Japan, a 23-year-old lightweight, died in hospital without regaining consciousness three weeks after being floored twice in the seventh round of an eight-round title bout in Osaka, western Japan.

December 1991 — Japanese junior featherweight Minoru Katsumata, 20, died after falling into a coma following a 10th round stoppage by compatriot Takashi Huraia in Tokyo.

1991 — Michael Watson spent 40 weeks in a coma and was left brain-damaged and confined to a wheelchair following his world title defeat in London by fellow Briton Chris Eubank.

November 1991 — South African Olive Skwebe died in hospital nine days after being knocked out. Skwebe, 20, had undergone two brain operations and lapsed into a coma after he was knocked out in the eighth round by Ndoda Mayende in a flyweight bout on November 17.

Boxer pronounced clinically dead

GLASGOW (R) — Scottish boxer James Murray, who collapsed at the end of a fight on Friday, was pronounced dead early on Sunday.

Boxing authorities have launched an investigation into rioting which broke out immediately after Murray collapsed in the ring. Five fans were hurt as chairs, bottles and glasses were thrown.

Murray underwent emergency surgery at Glasgow's South Central Hospital to remove a blood clot from his brain.

But the 25-year-old bantamweight never regained consciousness.

"By late yesterday all signs of neurological activity were extinct," said Garth Cruickshank, the consultant neurosurgeon who performed the two-hour operation on Friday night. "We performed a set of criteria then to establish whether that was the case."

"I again carried out a set of brain death criteria this morning and pronounced Mr. Murray dead at 0850."

Several newspaper reporters who were at the ringside in a Glasgow hotel on Friday said drunken rioters throwing bottles had delayed paramedics by vital seconds as they tried to reach the stricken Murray.

Murray's opponent, British title holder Drew Docherty, was said to be devastated at the news of Murray's death.

He issued a joint statement with his manager Tommy Gilmour saying: "Words just cannot express how badly we feel about James's death. Our thoughts are with his family and friends."

The British Medical Association on Sunday repeated its calls for boxing to be banned.

"This is yet another individual tragedy which highlights the fact that boxing is not a safe sport," a spokes-

man said.

"While the head remains a target there will continue to be tragedies like this and there will be chronic brain damage to a majority of boxers."

"Doctors will continue to warn of the dangers but it is for society to decide whether it can tolerate the continuing tragic waste of young lives in the name of sport."

Leading British promoter Frank Warren said on Saturday he found it hard to justify the sport in the light of what had happened.

Police are studying video film of the rioting to try to

identify the culprits in what British Board of Boxing Control General Secretary John Morris described as "one of the most disgusting scenes I've seen."

The Independent on Sunday's ringside reporter Derrick Whyte said bottles were thrown as soon as Murray collapsed.

"Paramedics rushing to the ring to assist the stricken fighter were hindered by those in their path."

Steve Buncf, the Sunday Telegraph's boxing correspondent, said many fans who had paid a reduced price to

stand at the back of the banqueting room where the fight was staged were clearly drunk.

"The scenes ... were sickening, with bare-chested men smearing blood from head wounds across their chests and aimlessly throwing bottles and glasses in all directions," he said.

But Dr. Cruickshank said the rioting had probably made no difference to Murray's fate.

"My own feelings would be that after the injury had actually occurred the pathology took its course," he said.

Don King employee gets immunity, testifies

NEW YORK (AP) — An employee of Don King's began testimony in the boxing promoter's insurance fraud case Friday after receiving immunity from prosecution.

Gladys Rosa, who worked as a translator for the boxing promoter, is the first of several witnesses the government plans to offer immunity to as it tries to prove King submitted a fake contract to Lloyd's of London in 1991 to recover \$350,000 illegally.

Rosa smiled at King and he smiled back as she headed for the witness stand.

King, 63, one of the most powerful men in boxing, is charged with nine counts of mail fraud. Each is punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. He is free on a \$250,000 personal recognisance bond.

In their opening statement earlier this week, prosecutors said Rosa would testify that she never saw a version of a contract between King and WBC super lightweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez even though she served as an interpreter for them.

Chavez, who speaks mostly Spanish, had to cancel his

June 1991 bout with Harold Brazier after he hurt his nose sparring.

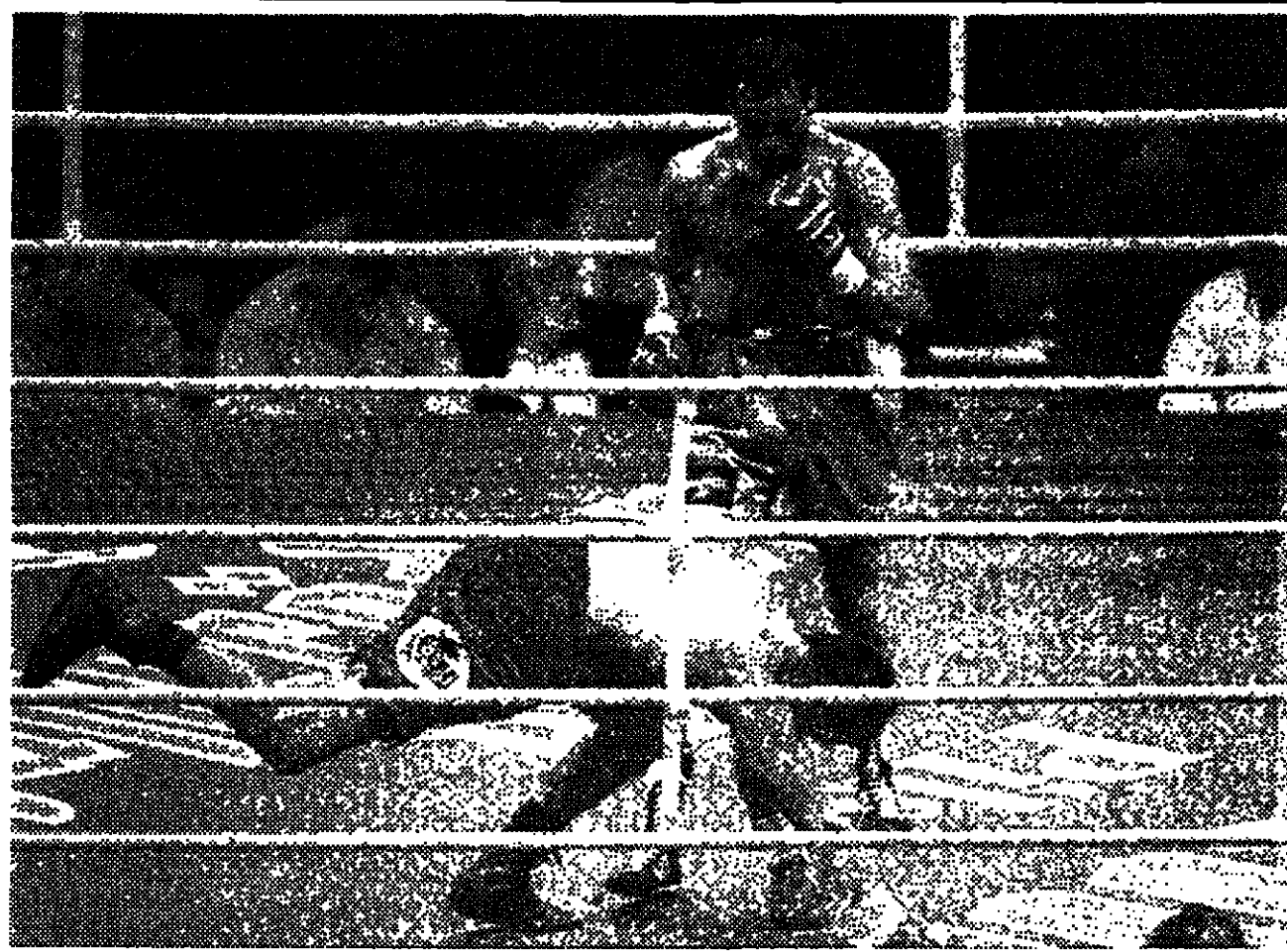
Rosa, who testified only briefly in a short court session Friday, said one of her early assignments for the promoter came when she was asked to go to Mexico with King, Mike Tyson and others to persuade Chavez to break a deal he had made to work for rival promoter Bob Arum.

She said King won Chavez back in part by telling him that he could guarantee purses of \$2 million a fight by putting the bouts on pay-per-view television rather than cable television.

She said she began working for King in 1990, when she made \$4,000 to \$5,000. Her pay reached its peak in 1994, when she was paid \$270,000.

Rosa said she has no written agreement to work for King but does her job as part of an oral contract that guarantees her \$8,330 a month plus bonuses and expenses.

She said she loaned her \$111,000 in 1992 but she has not repaid the money or any of the 3 per cent interest.



Challenger Graciano Roccigiani of Germany touches the ground during his fight against defending IBF light-

heavyweight boxing champion Henry Maske from Germany at Munich's Olympic hall (Reuters photo)

Washington, Ferreira advance to final

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (AP) — American Malivai Washington beat Arnaud Boetsch of France 6-3, 6-2 to advance into the final of the \$400,000 Czech Indoor men's tennis tournament Saturday.

In a replay of last year's final Washington broke Boetsch for a 4-2 lead and finished off the first set in 32 minutes.

The unseeded American continued his solid baseline play in the second set, capitalizing on Boetsch's unforced errors.

"I think I hit the ball pretty well and he didn't play as well as he would have liked," Washington said after the match.

In the other semifinal of the day, Wayne Ferreira of South Africa defeated Germany's Patrik Kuennen 6-2, 7-5.

Both players traded service breaks at the beginning of the first set with Ferreira consolidating his game first and winning 6-2.

Kuennen rallied in the second set and had three set points at 5-4, but the third-seeded Ferreira finally won the match after the German sent a backhand into the net.

14 Pakistani soccer players missing in Japan

TOKYO (AP) — A total of 14 soccer players from Pakistan were reported missing Saturday after taking part in an Asian Club Championship match, Kyodo news service said.

Kyodo, quoting unnamed officials of the Football Association of Japan, said the 14 were part of a 27-member Crescent Soccer Club team from Pakistan.

None of the 14 scheduled to return home on a Pakistani airliner flight that took off from Narita Airport Saturday afternoon showed up at the airport, Kyodo said. So far, only 11 of the team have left, it added.

The reported said some Japanese sports officials speculated the missing soccer players stayed behind to look for jobs.

Football association officials were not immediately available for comment.

Panel recalled to probe Murray tragedy

GLASGOW (R) — An independent panel set up after the death of boxer Bradley Stone last year will meet again to discuss the implications of the James Murray tragedy.

The panel, chaired by top neurosurgeon Peter Richards, is likely to look at issues such as medical facilities at the ringside and the number and duration of rounds at title fights.

It was formed to advise the British Boxing Board of Control after super-bantamweight Stone, 23, died two days after suffering brain damage in a British title

fight in April 1994.

Richards, or Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, said on Sunday: "We delivered a report to the board a few weeks ago outlining a number of suggestions which we hope will make things a bit safer. You can never make it totally safe."

"We will call another meeting and consider what happened over the weekend and decide whether any additions should be made to the report."

Its recommendations currently include:

— Replacing brain scans with

the more sophisticated magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

— Reviewing rules governing weighing before matches to ensure boxers do not dehydrate to meet the weight requirements.

— Looking at the number of rounds in a match and the length of each round to see whether they are too exacting and whether the boxers have competed over that distance before.

— Considering longer intervals between rounds.

The board's chief medical officer Adrian Whiteson,

who also sits on the panel, said he expected the board would publish new guidelines within a month.

But he acknowledged that some measures — such as MRI scans — might meet opposition from the boxing

world on the grounds of cost and because it might lead to boxers leaving the sport.

"But if we legislate or if doctors make recommendations then the promoters and managers of boxers have got to accept it."

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Ciller calls for snap polls after losing vote

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller lost a parliamentary vote of confidence on Sunday, and immediately called for snap general elections.

"Democracy and the country now need a very early general election," Ms. Ciller told parliament minutes after the final results were announced. She mentioned no date for the polls.

Thousands of workers took to the streets of Ankara earlier on Sunday to demand a "no" vote, after Ms. Ciller rejected their latest wage demands.

Legislators earlier voted 230 to 190 to refuse confidence in Ms. Ciller's minority government which she set up on Oct. 5 after securing the conditional support of the small Party of the Democratic Left (DSP) which has 10 seats and the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) of Alapsan Turkes, which holds 17 seats.

The DSP of Bulent Ecevit earlier threatened to vote against Ms. Ciller's government unless she immediately resolved the massive strike by public workers.

General elections were last

held in Turkey in October 1991 and would normally be due in October next year. The earliest possible date would be mid-December, as a minimum of two months is needed for preparation.

Under the country's constitution, parliament must decide whether or not the date should be brought forward. President Suleyman Demirel can also decide to call fresh elections.

Ms. Ciller has come under attack for resisting early elections and taking a hardline with striking civil servants. She claimed an early election would harm her economic austerity programmes and set back prospects for a customs union with the European Union.

Instead, she formed the minority government last week to replace the coalition that collapsed in September in a dispute over the belt-tightening measures.

In her speech to parliament after the vote, Ms. Ciller said her party paid the price for not giving into pay demands by strikers.

"We did not put interests before the interests of the country... our head remains high, high enough to touch

the sky," she said.

Ms. Ciller's failure will prolong the political crisis and may give conservative parties a chance at gaining the upper hand.

A right-leaning government may make it difficult to pass democratisation laws or lift limits on freedom of expression as demanded by the European Parliament. The reforms are necessary for Turkey's proposed customs union with the European Union at the end of the year.

The alternative to Ms. Ciller's minority coalition may be a broad-based government, including the pro-Islamic Welfare Party, which is against stronger European ties. But no radical changes are immediately expected to Turkey's Western-oriented policies or its role in the NATO military alliance.

Ms. Ciller told parliament last week that she would appeal for elections on Dec. 15 if she failed to secure the confidence vote. Although her centre-right Truth Path Party is the largest in parliament with 177 seats, it will be difficult for Ms. Ciller to impose her date on the legislature.

Talibans, Rabbani stymied in battle

KABUL (Agencies) — Rebel Taliban gunmen failed to breach the Afghan capital's defence Sunday, but a spokesman claimed the opposition force had captured at least 25 government troops.

For the fifth consecutive day, opposition fighters and government soldiers exchanged heavy artillery and rocket fire in the Rishkor hills at Kabul's southern city limits.

One rocket landed in the southern suburb of Karte Se, killing five people and wounding at least 15 others, a hospital official told the Associated Press.

The rocket landed outside the Afghan Red Crescent medical dispensary near a crowded market.

Both government and

opposition forces have been unable to make any headway in their offensives and counter offensives.

One government commander said his troops had been unable to make any progress against dug-in Taliban gunmen.

"The situation of southern Kabul has not changed although there were exchanges of heavy weapons fire," said government spokesman Amrullah, who like many Afghans uses only one name.

Amrullah, however, said government troops had moved forward against opposition positions on the western city of Kabul.

"We have taken the whole of the Sanglakh Valley," Amrullah said of the western district 20 kilometres from

Kabul. "We managed to capture the areas we were not in control of just this morning."

A Taliban spokesman in the northern Pakistani city of Peshawar claimed his troops had captured at least 25 government soldiers near Rishkor.

The claim could not be immediately confirmed.

Former Islamic students, the Taliban are aiming to topple the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military ally, Ahmad Shah Masoud.

However, according to reliable sources, the government forces suffered a setback Saturday when the Taliban recaptured the border region of Islam-Qala, which had reportedly fallen to the advancing troops several hours earlier.

Prince Hassan urges preachers to adopt moderation, advocate zakat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan met on Sunday with mosque preachers and imams and urged them to benefit from studies of ulamas and scholars who have been holding meetings in Amman, stressing that these studies constitute an important source that helps them in handling current issues.

Addressing the opening of a cultural seminar by imams working for the Jordanian Armed Forces, the Crown Prince underlined the need for the preachers to offer spiritual guidance to the young generation in the Armed Forces.

Prince Hassan urged the preachers to adopt and practise a centrist or moderate approach with which one can handle issues of injustice, stressing that Islam rejects injustice and oppression and seeks justice for all.

Referring to new terms in social and political life including the term cultural normalisation, Prince Hassan said that one had to draw the line and differentiate between normalisation in terms of cultural interaction and submission.

He said that Islam in the modern age should opt for openness and interaction with other cultures. Crown Prince Hassan repeated a call for establishing a zakat (alms for the poor) fund serving the Islamic nation, whereby the wealthy extend offer help to the poor.

Prince Hassan also met with engineers working for the Jordanian Armed Forces, praising their contributions to the country's development and in training the young generation for achieving that goal. He also urged the officers to give due attention to the need for integration between natural and human resources for development.

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Beirut plans controversial presidential term extension

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese government moves on Monday to extend the term of pro-Syrian President Elias Hrawi without holding elections in what has been called a "stab in the back" for Lebanese democracy.

Under a Syrian-backed scenario outlined by officials, the cabinet and parliament will petition Mr. Hrawi, whose six-year term ends on Nov. 24, to stay another three years by means of a constitutional amendment to be voted by parliament.

Mr. Hrawi, a 65-year-old Maronite Christian, lacks charisma and popularity but is seen as a good friend by Syrian leaders whose 35,000 troops in Lebanon make them the country's main power brokers.

Mr. Hrawi has held office since 1989. He was hurriedly co-opted in the closing year of the 1975-90 civil war after the car-bombing of his predecessor Rene Muawad within days of his election.

Some politicians, intellectuals, journalists and members of parliament — mostly Christians — have

opposed Mr. Hrawi's extension for months, but it is expected to win approval without difficulty when parliament votes the amendment on Thursday.

Opponents say it will be the beginning of the end for Lebanese democracy, moving the country sharply towards the stereotyped Arab model of long-serving rulers co-opted by obedient parliaments to repeated terms of office.

A columnist in the conservative Beirut daily Al Nahar, which has campaigned vigorously against the extension, said it would adapt Lebanon to the regional environment and give it membership of "the club of Arab regimes."

"Let those in power applaud themselves because they will prove... that the Lebanese system now belongs to the biggest Arab crisis, the crisis of the legitimacy of the regime," the columnist, a Sunni Muslim, wrote.

Christians, many of whom resent Syria's control of Lebanon since the civil war, have been particularly outspoken, saying the country was in-

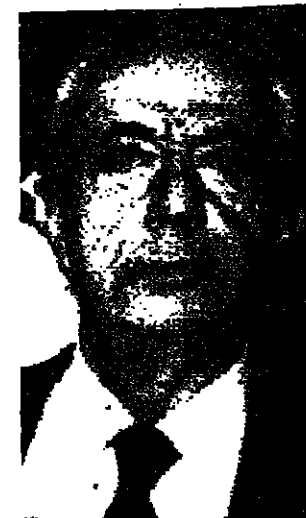
creasingly becoming a Syrian colony.

They say there is no crisis of domestic Lebanese interest that justifies suspending the presidential election and that the authorities have offered no public justification for it.

Government officials admit privately that the decision has been Syria's and that Damascus prefers to retain Mr. Hrawi while it confronts threatened regional isolation and unfinished peace talks with Israel.

As Lebanon's constitution now stands, parliament must elect a new president before Mr. Hrawi's term expires next month. It bars the incumbent from reelection and makes no provision for extending his term.

Last week 128 intellectuals appealed to parliament against the extension, saying: "The choice is between holding elections that restore to the nation its right to free choice... or stabbing democracy in the back and treating the Lebanese as an immature nation under custodianship."



Elias Hrawi

However, effective opposition rapidly melted away after Syrian President Hafez Al Assad made clear last week that Syria backs the proposal.

Many politicians and members of parliament hurriedly queued to pay their respects to Mr. Hrawi at his palace and newspapers said around 100 of the 128 deputies would vote for the proposal.

The amendment will authorise a one-off three-year extension for Mr. Hrawi. Newspapers said he was insisting on being consulted by the cabinet and parliament on the text of their petitions to him to stay on, saying they must list his achievements and say why he should remain.

COLUMN

Village of Pugwash suddenly finds itself on the map

OSLO, Norway (AP) — When the Nobel Committee announced Friday that Joseph Rotblat and his Pugwash Conferences won the 1995 peace prize, many immediately asked "Pugwhat?" "Pugwhere?" would have been more precise.

Pugwash is a fishing village of 775 people in western Nova Scotia, Canada, where scientists first got together in 1957 to try to protect humanity from their own inventions, namely nuclear weapons. The Pugwash Conferences are now held in the village every third year. Having Pugwash — an Indian name that means shallow waters — associated with the Nobel Prize was a thrill for Pugwashians. "This is the biggest thing that has ever happened to Pugwash," town council leader Harold Patterson, 63, told the Norwegian News Agency NTB by telephone.

Japanese who played dead arrested

MANILA (AP) — Police have arrested a Japanese businessman who faked his death so his family in Japan could collect his insurance, police said Saturday. Senior investigator Ramsey Ocampo said Takeshi Mori, a 47-year-old used car salesman from Osaka in western Japan, was arrested in the home of his Filipino wife in suburban Valenzuela. In Japan, police said they had searched several locations for evidence later Saturday, including the home of Mr. Mori's Japanese wife, Kayoko, 44, and his eldest son, 19, in the Izumi district of Osaka. They also questioned the two. In the Philippines, Mr. Mori will be charged with faking public documents. Mr. Ocampo said that last Jan. 9, Mr. Mori's Japanese wife, visiting the Philippines, reported that he was missing. On the same day, a dead man resembling Mr. Mori was found floating in Manila Bay. A son of Mr. Mori, identified as Ritsu, who also was visiting, claimed that a watch and ring found on the cadaver belonged to his father and identified the body. It was cremated and brought to Japan, where Mr. Mori's family later applied to collect a still unspecified amount of insurance. No other identity for the body has been established, but last September, the Japanese embassy had requested a discreet investigation because of doubts about Mr. Mori's supposed death. The embassy said it could not issue a death certificate on Mr. Mori because the family had already cremated the body before the embassy could inspect it. Surveillance of Mr. Mori's supposed Filipino widow showed that a Japanese man with the same features as Mr. Mori was still living there. They arrested him Wednesday.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Germany honours controversial orientalist

FRANKFURT, Germany (R) — German President Roman Herzog on Sunday defended a controversial orientalist under fire for her views on British author Salman Rushdie and honoured her for promoting understanding between Muslims and Christians. Wading into a debate about freedom of speech and political correctness, Mr. Herzog praised Annemarie Schimmel, 73, as a builder of bridges among cultures at a ceremony in Frankfurt awarding her the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Book Trade. "We cannot live together in the long run if we do not talk with each other and know nothing of one another," he said. "Annemarie Schimmel has paved the way for this in our relations with Islam and shown us how to build paths to other cultures." More than 200 intellectuals had protested against her nomination to receive the award, accusing her of supporting a death sentence that Iran passed on Mr. Rushdie for alleged blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad in his novel the Satanic Verses.

Gulf to save Arabian leopard from extinction

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Wildlife experts from four Gulf states met in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday to discuss measures to save the endangered Arabian leopard from extinction, organisers said. The two-day seminar in Sharjah brought together delegates from the UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Yemen as well as representatives from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. They were discussing the causes of the Arabian leopard's decline and measures that could be taken to prevent its extinction. The Sharjah-based Arabian Leopard Trust (ALT) said in a statement. Officials said it was the first workshop in the region to be devoted entirely to the Arabian leopard.

Greece formally lifts Macedonia embargo

GEVGLIJA (AP) — Greece on Saturday formally ended an 18-month embargo against Macedonia, opening its border with its impoverished landlocked northern neighbour. But there was little traffic in either direction on this border crossing, 120 kilometres southeast of the Macedonian capital Skopje, as an agreement to end the embargo took effect. On Saturday, only those Macedonians with official invitations from Greek authorities were allowed into Greece, Macedonian police said. Several cars with Macedonian licence plates were turned back by Greek customs officials. Greece agreed to open its border after Macedonia last week changed its flag to modify an ancient Greek symbol, the 16-pointed star of Vergina, and declared its constitution does not imply claims on Greek territory.

British minister assails Iran, Iraq

MANAMA (AP) — Britain's armed forces minister has accused Iran of "causing mischief" in the region, and stressed the need for a collective Gulf security force, the Al Hayat daily reported Sunday. The Arabic-language newspaper quoted Nicholas Soames as saying at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretariat in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, that Iran was a "very destabilising force" in the region. Speaking Saturday, he said a collective security force by the six nations of the GCC — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain — was an "important initiative." Al Hayat reported. It quoted Soames as saying Britain had been a long-standing supplier of high-class equipment to Saudi Arabia, and interested in supplying Challenger 2 tanks to the kingdom.

Mubarak sends more Brotherhood members for trial by military court

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ordered on Sunday a second trial of 27 members of the banned Muslim Brotherhood group before a military court, legal sources said.

The 27 were arrested over the past few weeks, chief among them Abdul menem Abdul Fattoh, former head of the medical union and one of the 150 Brothers running as a candidate in legislative elections set for Nov. 29.

The Muslim Brotherhood said the current head of the scientists union, Al Sayed Abdul Star Al Miligi, as well as a number of other union figures and parliament candidates, were also among those detained.

Police who arrested the 27 accused them of "seeking to finance the terrorist group Al Gamaa Islamiyah for attacks in Minya province" in south Egypt, the legal sources said.

The announcement comes on the heels of a first military trial of 49 Brotherhood members which caused a storm of condemnations from human rights group when it started on Sept. 16.

The 49 Brotherhood mem-

bers, who include union figures, former deputies and an official from the religious authority Al Azhar, have been charged with "directing an illegal organisation aiming to impede the rule of law and constitution."

Controversy has focused on Mr. Mubarak's decision to try them before a military tribunal, which usually considers cases connected to militant unrest, even though none of the 49 are accused of planning "terrorism" or "violence."

Banned in 1954, the Brotherhood has been tolerated after the government since the mid-1970s when it said it foreswore violence in its bid to create Islamic rule in Egypt.

But the truce came to an end last year when Mr. Mubarak accused the group of being behind armed extremist groups seeking to overthrow his government. Dozens of arrests followed.

The Egyptian government came under attack from Sudan's top Islamic leader Hassan Al Tourabi for putting the Muslim fundamentalists on trial.

Dr. Tourabi, who wields considerable influence in Sudan although he holds no official post in the government, was quoted on state radio describing the trials as unjust. He said the trials "are only going to prompt tens of thousands of Egyptians to confront the regime and raise the flag of Islam."

"The charges against the Islamists are baseless as those on trial are trade unionists, scholars and leaders who have not gone on strike, taken part in demonstrations or moved against the government," Dr. Tourabi was quoted as saying.

The trials, Dr. Tourabi said, were arranged by the Egyptian government to prevent the Islamists from running and winning any vote in next month's parliamentary elections.

Suspects to be tried

An Egyptian military court will try in absentia the "mastermind" of the June assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, legal sources said on Sunday.

Paris carbomb 'unlinked' to earlier guerrilla blasts

PARIS (R) — French officials tried on Sunday to play down public concern that a crude car bomb blast in the northern outskirts of Paris was linked to recent attacks by suspected Algerian extremists.

But France's main police union, worried about a surge in domestic violence, urged President Jacques Chirac to scrap planned talks with Algerian President Liamine Zeroual to avoid the impression of siding with his military-backed government.

The burning stolen car, parked in suburban Le Blanc-Mesnil, blew up early on Saturday when the fire ignited a fully charged camping gas canister that had been placed on a seat.

Four police officers who had rushed to the scene after an anonymous telephone call were slightly hurt by the explosion.

Official sources said the inquiry into the blast would be led by local police rather than the anti-terrorist squad, which saw no direct links between the incident and seven bombs planted in France since July which have killed seven people and injured more than 140.

The owner of the car, Arthur Fonseca, said there had been no gas canister in the car when he last saw it. Many of the bombs in France have been packed in hollowed-out gas canisters loaded with explosives and nails and bolts to maximise damage.

Jean-Louis Arajol, head of the general police union, said criminals were forsaking low-level violence such as stone-throwing to imitate guerrilla methods. "Today terrorism acts dominate over every form of violence," he said.

"There was the intention of killing police officers. It's obvious... it was an ambush," he told France-Info radio. But it said later that a prosecutor had identified the person who made the call and that it did not seem to be a set-up.

Mr. Arajol said Mr. Chirac gave the impression of backing Mr. Zeroual by announcing he would meet him in New York weeks before a Nov. 16 presidential election in which Mr. Zeroual is a candidate.

Egypt slated for heated legislative elections

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is set for a heated campaign in legislative elections slated for November 29 when the opposition will participate for the first time in eight years.

Even though President Hosni Mubarak only announced the date of elections on Saturday and no runners have been officially registered, candidates' banners were already strung across Cairo streets by the evening.

Opposition party newspapers have begun lauding their nominees and launched a debate on the integrity of elections, which they say the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) has skewed in the past.

The attention is in stark contrast to the last vote in 1990, which passed all but unnoticed. All opposition

parties except the Marxists boycotted the poll and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait distracted the public's attention.

The liberal Wafd Party and the officially banned Muslim Brotherhood look set to be the main competitors to Mr. Mubarak's NDP, which is however not expected to lose its majority in parliament.

"If the elections are free and if the government remains impartial and guarantees a vote without fraud, we expect some very nice surprises," the secretary general of the Wafd, Saad Fakhri Abdul Nur, told AFP.

"Even if the government does put pressure (on voters), the Wafd will get between 20 and 25 per cent of the 444 seats that are up

for election. The Wafd will put forward "at least 350 candidates" in the 222 voting districts, each of which gets two representatives in the People's Assembly.

The opposition has demanded guarantee for clean elections, including international observers, accusing the government of forging votes and barring opposition candidates from state-run radio and television.

Prime Minister Atef Sedki, quoted in the government daily Al Ahram on Saturday, retorted that "elections will be 100 per cent free."

"Mubarak is very concerned that elections take place in a democratic atmosphere. All guarantees known to democratic states will be assured," he said. Parliamentary Speaker

Fathi Surur ruled out international observers, telling the state news agency MENA that bringing them in would be "unconstitutional."

The Muslim Brotherhood will field 130 candidates and hope to take a third of the seats, the group's deputy head Mustafa Mashhur said.

The Progressive Unionist Rally (Marxist), which won 10 parliament seats in 1990, announced it would put forward 40 candidates.

"The small number is due to a lack of funds," party head Khaled Mohieddin told MENA.

The Nasserists will field 45 candidates, party sources said. Mr. Mohieddin, whose party has come out strongly against the Brotherhood

underlined that "religious slogans must be kept out of elections. The party is against mixing religions into electoral politics."

But Egypt's estimated six million Christians stand to be an important voting bloc in November. The church "encourages its followers to register for elections but without intervening in their political choices," spokesman Talaat Gadallah said.

The number of Coptic voters is unknown, but "they will make the difference in the elections and they have a lot of weight in Cairo, Alexandria and south Egypt," he told AFP.

The elections also have an international angle. For the first time, the 18,000 bedouins in the southern border zone of Halaib will vote. Halaib is claimed by both Egypt and Sudan.